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# Horticulture in Tribal Economy\*

BHUPINDER SINGH

I believe to-day is a great day in the history of tribal development. For decades we have been taking of it, but to-day we are in an assembly of learned and experience men gathered to deliberate on one aspect of it which has taken shape in the field. I cannot help repeating what I have felt and said elsewhere that the gap between the conception and execution mars many an enterprise. I call the present occasion great because here, in the aspect under consideration, there is a conscious and successful attempt towards bridging the gap.

2. If, during the past five years, we have been guilty of over-emphasizing "strategy" for tribal development, I think it has been for good reason. The cause of planning and development cannot be ruined more than when the process of planning becomes paramount and makes human beings subservient to planning experiments. It has to be well-understood that planning is for human beings and not human beings for planning. Starting from this premise, the existing parameters of a given set of people who are the subject of development are to be clearly defined. Next, the objectives and goals on development have to be clearly laid down. Lastly, the methodology and tools to be adopted

for transforming the given set of conditions into the desiderata have to be carefully chosen and adopted. Though the early planners after independence were aware that the goals and techniques for planning for tribal development would have to be different than for the people at large, it is from the Fourth Plan period onwards that the matter acquired focus. To-day, I am glad to say that hardly any eye-brow is raised when one talks of the strategy of tribal development being different from that for development of the non-tribal people. In fact, judging from what one knows of the tribal milieu, it would be more apt to evolve a philosophy for tribal development. Years ago, Verrier Elwin talked of "a philosophy for NEFA".

3. The tribal world is a world of its own, ethnically, demographically, historically, politically, economically, socially, educationally, culturally and psychologically. This does sound pompous, but is, nevertheless, true. There is the story of a tribesman who used to kick the pot near his feet before getting up in the morning to find out whether it contained adequate gruel for the day to enable him to decide whether he needed to get up at all or could continue to laze in bed. Like all parables this may

\* Text of the Speech delivered by Shri Bhupinder Singh, Commissioner, Secretary, Tribal & Rural Welfare Department, Government of Orissa at the Symposium on Horticultural Plantations in Tribal areas, Orissa.

contain partial truth, but is sufficiently indicative of the motivation factor. This single factor is all pervasive. His striving towards better living appears to be the propelling force behind the so-called civilised man. Yet, there is a limit to which one can stretch it. Beyond that point, one begins to ask question. What is good living and wherefor? Some students of the tribal scene still question the validity of programme of action for tribals, for they feel that it is not wise to upset rudely the centuries-old delicate man-nature ecological balance. These are queries which will continue to agitate the sensitive mind and answers will have to be found. In the meantime, certain facts called for sustained attention.

4. Purely in terms of economics, there is no doubt that certain tribal communities live on the brink between starvation and sustenance. For example, the Juangs, the Mankadias have been under-nourished since generations and no philosophical question can and should stand in the way of development of their economy to provide adequate food and sustenance. Secondly, it is an historical fact that tribals were driven away from lush alluvial plains to the most infertile and inhospitable tracts where agricultural productivity is low. Thirdly, having lived in isolation for centuries and cut off from the rest of the world, the tribals have a limited world-view, though this by itself has not been an unmixing evil since it has nurtured them into a frank, honest, gay, singing and dancing culture. The limited world-view has, however, imposed certain handicaps on them, particularly in their relationship vis-a-vis outsiders, as a consequence of which they have been exploited for a long time. I have attempted very briefly to outline some outstanding characteris-

tics of the tribal scene which sets it apart from the non-tribal world. There are a host of other characteristics differentiating the two. This is not the place to dwell at length on them. The point I wish to make is that the two sections of the society are so distinct from each other that a philosophy of development of the one will not be suitable for the other. Once this distinction is accepted, and I hope that by and large it will be, it is easy to etch out the broad contours of the strategy for tribal development.

5. The State's sub-Plan does attempt to be inspired by the under-lying tenet. The policies and programmes it contains are claimed to have been suffused with the idea of enabling the tribal to develop along the line of his own genius. Lest one is accused of entering an esoteric field and hence of becoming subject to ambiguities and vagueness, I hasten to add that the policies and programmes are as tangible as any other. They are aimed at producing solid concrete results. If the results produced stand the test of validity one cannot escape the conclusion that the under-lying promise was well-founded.

6. I do not wish to lose myself in the welter of all the sub-Plan sectoral programmes. This seminar relates to only one of them viz., Horticulture under the broad head of Agriculture. It is necessary to consider this sector particularly. In some of what I have to say of it, perhaps I shall be anticipating some of the learned Pandits assembled here. At one juncture I had thought I should steer clear of their field. I find that rather difficult.

7. Tribal agriculture is dominated by four outstanding features. Firstly, by and large, the land is slopy and uneven. The riverine deltas and

alluvial flats are conspicuous by their absence. The soils are generally poor, lateritic and porous. Secondly, so much forest denudation has been occurring in these areas that the ecological balance has been disturbed. This has contributed to loss of soil nutrients. Thirdly, shifting cultivation called 'Podu' has been adopted by tribals as a common mode of agriculture. In the past, when man-land ratio was high with much less pressure of population and hence a longer fallow cycle, Podu appeared to be not an unscientific method. But, now with an increasing population, the cycle of rotation has become much shorter exerting a deleterious effect on soil regime. Podu is practised generally on hill slopes which are consequently laid bare of vegetation. Fourthly, jhola lands in valleys having better soil conditions and, perhaps, some water are limited.

8. Taking these conditions into account, the overall picture that emerges is that tribal agriculture is really subsistence agriculture, one of the important components being shifting cultivation. The yields are poor, not only because of the soil conditions but also on account of the inability of the poor tribal to make capital investment in the land. In fact, subsistence economy leaves hardly any surplus for that. Podu cultivation yields millets, particularly small millets, pulses and oilseeds, but he has seldom enough of them. Wherever possible, he combines rice and maize cultivation along with Podu cultivation.

9. The obvious strategy for development of tribal agriculture would be to make massive financial investments and introduce technology capable of giving maximum yields. However, there are a number of constraints. Firstly, the obvious constraint is finance. One can see no time either in the present or in the future when

resources adequate to meet the situation would be available. Hence, the existing available resources have to be put to the best possible use. Secondly, in respect of advanced technology, a hindrance is the inability of the tribal to assimilate it. To understand this limitation, we have to have a look at his present technology. Though some communities like the Santals, the Kisans and the Gonds have adopted many modern methods profitably, some of the backward communities like Kutia Kondhs, Lanjia Sauras, Bondas, etc., have, in many cases, not adopted an iron share for the plough. One is astonished to see that some of these communities have not gone beyond the hand-hoe stage in the remoter areas. Imposition of an advanced technology might be repulsive to them. Hence, only such technological tools will be acceptable as are just one degree or two degrees above their present level. This will inevitably mean that the economic progress will be slower. Thirdly, the technology to be adopted should accord with topographic and agroclimatic conditions. Topography is mostly of undulating type and flat plains are absent. The soils are not capable of high water-retentivity or nutrients-retentivity. The climate is generally mild even cool though rain-fall is not free of erratic behaviour.

10. These factors cannot conduce to introduction of the latest technology. More important, they call for a strategy which can combat the ravages of Podu. It is in this context that horticultural plantations particularly on Podu-ravaged slopes has been conceived. It is interesting to note that while the tribal may have little compunction in felling even valuable teak trees, he does not cut fruit trees. This is borne out by various well-known authorities who have commented appreciatively on the psychology of tribals towards preservation of fruit trees. It has

strengthened the belief that fruit plantations may be one of the answers to the problem of shifting cultivation.

11. When we were groping towards a solution of the shifting cultivation problem and fingers were being placed on horticultural plantation, our Horticulture Directorate came to our rescue with the technique of *in situ* plantation. Described in lay-man's language it means that the country variety of fruit tree is planted. Its native qualities enable it to survive the rigours of dry, rainless summer following its planting in the rainy season. After the root system stabilises itself, it is side-grafted or top-grafted with a scion variety. Experience indicates that the product is imbued with the fruit of the scion variety while the tree is endowed with the characteristics of the country stock.

12. Initially, the Horticulture Directorate made a survey of the sub-Plan area with a view to locating agro-climatic regions suitable for horticultural plantations. They identified 15 such regions which offered congenial conditions for growth of fruit and vegetable crops. These are indicated as hereunder.

- (1) Pottangi-Semiliguda-Nandpur.
- (2) Koraput-Rayagada
- (3) Kashipur
- (4) Niamgiri-Bissam Cuttack
- (5) Balimela
- (6) Thuamul-Rampur
- (7) Daringbadi
- (8) Mohona
- (9) G. Udayagiri-Raikia
- (10) Balliguda-Kothgarh
- (11) Bhoiyanpirh-Juangpirh
- (12) Joshipur-Nawana
- (13) Lefrigada
- (14) Kaptipada
- (15) Koira-Lahumipada

13. It is perhaps little known that some of the tribal farmers have been adept in the art of horticulture. Some of the tribal communities have been cultivating some particular species for generations. For example, the Sauras of the Ganjam Agency tract have been growing citrus fruits for decades and the Dongria Kondhs of Niamgiri hills of Koraput district have been doing likewise in respect of not only citrus fruits but also pineapple, banana, etc. Here was, therefore, a happy combination of circumstances. The favourable agroclimatic conditions had already been realised by the tribal communities who developed the expertise. Hence, we thought of building up on the tribal genius in this regard.

14. The crops we have chosen are the common ones with which the tribals have been familiar and which are more or less household. We have also depended on our observations of the trees which invited tribal inhibition in so far as their destruction was concerned. It was noticed that while the tribals had no qualms in doing away with many important economic species they preserved.

Mango	..	Mangifera Indica
Mahua	..	Bassia latifolia
Kendu	..	Dyosolrus embryocentis
Tamarind	..	Tamarindus indicus
Baryanas	..	Hicis benghalensis
Marking nut	..	Anacardium vahit
Fig	..	Ficus glomerates
Wood apple	..	Aegle Mermelos
Jack fruit	..	Artocarcus integrifolia
Salapa	..	Carvoia urena
Jaman	..	Ugenia Jambolana

It was clear, therefore, that if we wanted to make a success of the programme, we should go in for these

well-known and well-loved species. This has been our attempt during the past couple of years.

15. During the course of last two years, about 4,000 acres have been planted in compact areas with mango, guava, papaya, jack-fruit, pineapple, etc. It is recognised that the gestation period of the various varieties is various. Mango may yield fruit in 4 or 5 years' time, while papaya may fruit within a year. Diversification of crops enables return to start early. We are also seriously thinking of implementing the idea of inter-cultural crops, whether they be purely agricultural varieties or horticultural varieties. It is proposed to take up between 5,000 and 10,000 acres in the current year. Priority would be given to plantation over Podu-ravaged areas.

16. It is indeed a fortunate coincidence that this august assembly is taking place in the district of Phulbani which is considered to be ideal for fruit cultivation. Some of us are apt to regard the tribal folks as stupid and devoid of common-sense, but when we have a closer look at their culture and ecology, we feel humbled when we come across remarkable instances of how they have struck harmony with Nature. For example, in this district of Phulbani, they have been growing spice crops like turmeric, ginger, etc. On the strength of the potential of Phulbani district and paying regard to the practices of the Phulbani tribals, we have recently launched a Fruits Tribal Station at Kalinga with a branch at Daringbadi. The idea is to experiment with crops which are not yet popular but which hold fair promise. I am sure, in time to come Phulbani and Koraput districts will rival the Mulu and Kangra Valleys of the North.

17. It has been indicated that our policy hereafter would be that most

of the horticultural plantations would be sited over Podu-ravaged areas. These areas are generally Government waste lands classified as protected forests and in some cases Podu-ravaged lands are in reserve forests. We have been considering the question of rights which ought to be conferred on the tribals vis-a-vis these plantations. Tentatively, the view prevails that assignment of land would not only be unnecessary but might also create complications. For example, once the land is permanently assigned to a tribal family, there would be no guarantee that horticultural plantations would be continued or that they would not revert to practice of Podu. There is a risk also of such land being alienated. For the time being, we have deemed it enough to ensure that the right of usufruct accrues to the tribal. In other words, a plot of about a hectare would allow the tribal family to collect adequate produce to consume and to sell.

18. This brings me to the important question of marketing. When thousands of acres are being put under fruit crops which are liable to perish quickly on ripening, marketing arrangements must be prompt and fool-proof. I do not claim that we have been able to find a proper answer to it. We are still groping towards a satisfactory solution. For the time being, the thinking is like this. We have in the State a Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation, which is functioning at the State level, *inter alia* for procurement and marketing tribal farm and forest produce. They have a net-work of about 280 centres for the purposes, through which procurement is done and marketing is undertaken at the State level. These village centres are soon going to be replaced by LAMPS i.e., Large-size Multipurpose Co-operative Societies. This means that, at the primary level, the LAMPS would be able to take

charge of the procurement and the produce thus procured would be made over to the T. D. C. C. which would make marketing arrangements. This is but one of the ways which could help solve the problem. We do not rule out other alternatives. For example, private trade could also step in and the T. D. C. C. would act as a correcting instrument in case of market aberrations.

19. Apart from marketing, another aspect which has been engaging our attention is processing of fruit and vegetables. This is necessary since apart from preventing these materials decaying for want of adequate and prompt marketing arrangements, their conversion would bring in employment opportunities and acquisition of skill among the tribals. Provision has been kept for processing in the sub-Plan.

20. From various points of view, it would appear that the Horticulture Plantation Programme is going to be one of the most important programmes for tribal development. It is founded

on the natural resource endowment of the tribal areas. It seeks to exploit the inherent genius and acquired expertise of some tribal communities. Horticulture will step in where agriculture is not feasible. It will help deal with the large-looming problem of Podu. It will strengthen the economy of the tribal family and add to its inadequate food budget. Further, diversification of economy is expected to bring in incidental advantages like additional employment opportunities and scope for acquisition of new skills. It appears, therefore, that in the tribal context it is a sound programme. What has given a new dimension to it is the *in situ* technique which makes use of the native qualities of the country stock for the growth of the tree and pedigree qualities of scion stock for fruit. The technique has been applied for the first time on a massive scale. We are watching the results anxiously. So far the present indications go, the programme gives bright promise of success. One feels assured that it will go down with the tribals. Failing, we may have to seek out other alternatives.



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# Tribal Development— The New Strategy\*

B. D. SHARMA

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It is a matter of great pleasure that the Government of Orissa have instituted an extension lecture series on tribal development. Professor Vidyarthi and Dr. Roy Burman, two illustrious academicians, have already spoken on the subject. It is now my privilege to carry forward the discussion and provide a link in the thinking process. As my experience relates primarily to administration, let me address myself to some of those aspects which concern us at the grass-root level. I have also been closely associated at different stages with the formulation of the new programme. I would, therefore, share my experience in this sort of work. It may help us in further clarifying our ideas. We may be able to improve the quality of our programme formulation.

2. Before we take up the question of strategy of tribal development in the Fifth Plan, it will be useful if we can have a detailed picture of the tribal situation in the country. What are the basic frame and the special features of this developmental plan of action? What efforts have been made in the last Five Year Plans? What has retarded the growth of these communities? What are our lapses? How are these defects being remedied by means of

the new scheme? What are the distinguishing features of the new strategy? These are some of the questions to which I would invite your attention in course of my brief discussion this afternoon.

## A Resume of Tribal Situation

3. Let us have, in the first instance, a resume of the tribal scene in the country. The total population in India is about 3.8 crores, that is, about 7 per cent of the population in our country belong to the one or the other tribal group. Many a time, a question is asked as to 'what is a tribal?' Academicians have tried to define the essential characteristics of a tribal group; the Dhebar Commission has also described it. The characteristics of tribal community are, in brief, its exclusiveness, geographical variation and a self-contained economic structure. We may not go into the merit of the classification based on these criteria. For the purposes of our discussion a tribal community is one which has been defined as the Scheduled tribe in the Constitution. In a way, this is a tautological definition. Thus, whatever communities have been

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\* Text of the speech delivered by Dr. B. D. Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India 1955 in the Tribal & Harijan Research Centre Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

scheduled by the President under the Constitution are our subject of attention. These communities are spread all over our country. The distribution of the tribal population as it stood in 1971 has been indicated in the Table attached herewith.

4. It is, thus, clear that purely from demographic point of view there is wide variation from one region to another. In some areas there is large tribal concentration. Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa are cases in point. In other areas like West Bengal and the three Southern States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnatak they are extremely dispersed. While in some States like the Punjab, there are no tribals, in the States and Union Territories in the North East the tribals constitute the majority. In some States like Orissa they form a substantial part (23 per cent) of the total population and in others they are an insignificant minority.

5. If we look at the level of development, here also we find that the tribal communities are almost at all levels of socio-economic spectrum. One notices the most primitive as well as the most advanced tribals. Some groups in North East are very progressive educationally and economically. If we consider the cases of others, we find that there are certain groups which are still at the food-gathering stage. These groups are, however, few. They live on the fringe of the more advanced tribal communities or the more advanced non-tribal communities. Take the case of Birhors in Bihar or the Hill Paharias in Madhya Pradesh. These groups are on the fringe of the other tribal communities. The Jenu Kurubas in Karnataka are at the fringe of advanced non-tribal communities. The Bondas in Orissa are an isolated primitive group.

6. Now, if we look at the social side of the tribal community, we find

different degrees of assimilation of Hindu culture. There are some groups like the Bhatras in Bastar who are almost a part of the Hindu social system. They wear 'Yagyopavita' and worship the same gods. There is no inter caste marriage between the Bhatras and the other tribal groups. In the Central Indian tribal tract, we find even social hierarchy among the tribal groups themselves. The concepts of the traditional Hindu system have been assimilated by the tribals. For example, in Bastar the place of a tribal group in the hierarchy is determined by the marriage custom and ritual purity. The level of a community in the social hierarchy depends on whether the groups dine with the neighbouring groups or whether the group eats beef or not. Similarly, children begotten of inter caste marriages are generally taken to belong to the lower community. Thus, the level of a community is known by the fact whether that particular community accepts the bride or the bridegroom from the other communities or not. A community accepting girls or boys from another community is deemed to be lower.

7. It is thus clear that sociologically, economically, educationally, demographically, the tribal situation in the country is not uniform. If we talk about the 'tribal development' we cannot, therefore, talk of any thing concrete and common. Each tribal programme has to be special to a particular area, to a particular community, even to a particular time. Things are changing so fast that any description of a given period of time may become out of date within a few years. Two months ago, I visited an area known as Patalkot in Madhya Pradesh which is traditionally considered to be an unknown world. I found that the so called 'unknown' world did not exist. The group had been described as primitive in course

of the operation of a Workshop on Primitive Groups held as late as February 1975. But in the course of last 10 years new contacts were established. The area being small, the spread-effect was rapid and the primitive characteristics of the group disappeared. Similarly, if one goes around Bailadila, in Bastar, M. P., or Ranchi in Bihar with impressions gathered from recent studies, one will be confounded. There is need for acquaintance with revised version. Thus, time dimension itself is very important in any discussion on tribal development. It should be appreciated that the tribal situation is changing fast. The level of economic development of a tribal community is lower than that of the neighbouring non-tribal groups. It may be extremely backward in some areas. But the more backward an area, the faster will be the pace of change under planned development. This is broadly the tribal scene as it presents itself today in our country.

### **Constitutional Frame**

8. The second important aspect for consideration is the basic frame for the development of tribal communities and areas provided in the Constitution. I need not dwell at length on this aspect. I may briefly mention that the Constitution-makers were anxious for the rapid development of the tribal areas. They were also aware of the special tribal situation we have just now reviewed. It is against this background that we find a self-contained and flexible frame specially designed for these areas within the broader Constitutional frame. In the Fifth and Sixth Schedule there is complete flexibility relating to the legal processes, which is the backbone of the entire institutional frame in a democratic system. There is an important distinction between the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule. The Sixth Schedule is appli-

cable to the region covered by the erstwhile State of Assam whereas the Fifth Schedule is applicable to the other areas. Broadly speaking, the tribal situation in the North-East is considerably different from the tribal situation in the rest of the country. North-East has remained comparatively aloof from the general Indian scene. It is more inaccessible, and there is larger concentration of the tribal communities. Therefore, socially and economically, it is a more homogenous area. In a homogenous situation specific prescriptions are possible. That is why the Sixth Schedule is much more specific when it deals with tribal situation in Assam. The Fifth Schedule, on the other hand, is not specific but is largely permissive in character.

9. In the Fifth Schedule the executive has been given almost full discretion about the legal frame which may be useful for the tribal areas. It is the legal frame which, finally, is the basis of the entire set-up, whether administrative or financial, or institutional. If the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution makes the legal frame completely flexible, as a corollary, the entire administrative and financial and institutional frame for the tribal areas become *ipso facto* completely flexible. It can help the executive to mould the system according to the requirements of each area. The Governor can make regulations and change the laws enacted by the Parliament or by the State legislature, or he can declare any laws as inapplicable to any tribal area. Not only are the legislative powers extensive, but the Constitution also provides that the executive power of the Union Government extends to giving of directions in relation to the Scheduled areas as also for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes. The power for directions implicitly carries with it the necessary responsibility. Thus, it is not alone the States which are accountable, the final and ultimate responsibility for the

development of the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Areas rests with the President and the Union Government.

10. Another important feature in the Constitution is in relation to the financial provision. The First Proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution is unique and it makes all the recurring and non-recurring expenditure in relation to the development of the Scheduled Areas and the welfare of Scheduled Tribes a charge on the Consolidated Fund of India. In fact according to this provision, any scheme which is approved by the Union Government automatically acquires financial sanction and becomes a charge. Therefore, the Constitution makes full provision for financial commitments.

11. The Constitution also makes a provision for the appointment of a Commissioner for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. It has to oversee whether the constitutional guarantees have been properly implemented. It submits to the President an annual report which is presented to the Parliament. The sovereign authority of the country scrutinizes the report and forms an impression of the progress in the tribal areas. It appears that the Constitution-makers were of the view that the provisions should ensure the rapid development of the tribal areas. That is, why they have embodied a direction for the setting up of a Commission at the end of 10 years from the date of the commencement of the Constitution in order to review the tribal situation and to recommend further measures of development. This Commission was set up in 1961 under the Chairmanship of Shri U. N. Dhebar. The Commission made extensive recommendations about the approach to tribal development and suggested concrete steps. The basic structure of the Constitution, however, remains unchanged.

## **A resume of Developmental Effort**

12. This brings us to the question of developmental effort made in the tribal areas so far. Let us review the action launched for the purpose. In the early 1950s, the country embarked on an extensive programme of rural upliftment known as Community Development Project. It was a comprehensive, perhaps ambitious, programme which aimed at total development of the rural community. In fact its concept is unrivalled. It may be recalled that three Community Development Projects were started in the beginning. Drawing upon that experience, an extensive programme of Community Development Blocks was taken up. The Community Development theme had its sway for a decade or so. According to that programme, everything was to be viewed from the people's angle. Village plans were prepared; officers contacted the rural population in village level camps; a new spirit pervaded the countryside. Thus, after a long spell of foreign rule administrators and the people met at a friendly convention for a meaningful dialogue of national development. In this context, there could not have been any other method of development of tribal areas. Conceptually, the community development project was in itself an extremely flexible model; it emphasised that officers and officials should go to the people and work up the programme; it forbade any superimposition on the rural areas of the priorities meant for the urban elite. Therefore, when the attention of national leaders was drawn to the tribal areas, a programme of Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks on the same model was taken up. The investments were higher. Forty-three such blocks were started. A study team under Mr. Varrier Elwin reviewed the working of these blocks just after three years, and recommended a comparatively less intensive programme of the tribal development blocks but on a larger scale.

13. Viewed in the light of the working of the community development project on a large scale, the tribal development block programme was, in effect, its further intensification. The logic was that the tribal areas were more backward; the distance on the road of development required to be covered by those areas was much longer, compared with the other areas in the country. The conclusion was that a greater investment of resources was necessary. Therefore, the tribal development block programme was started almost as a supplementary Community Development Block programme. That is why the two structures are similar. Under the C. D. concept, there were initially two stages, National Extension Service and Community Development. A third post-intensive stage was added subsequently. Corresponding to these to stages, a two-stage T. D. Block programme was super-imposed. However, the area for a tribal development block was smaller and the total outlay for each region was, therefore, considerably larger.

14. The T. D. Block programme was expected to take care of all the problems of the tribal areas. Thus, this programme like the C. D. programme in the beginning was quite comprehensive. In fact these were the only programmes on the scene at that time. It may be recalled that during the British days there were hardly any organised development activities for rural areas. The District Agricultural Officer, as late as mid-fifties, was a junior assistant to the Collector and District Magistrate. Now, as the new developmental plans began to unfold itself in a number of other important sectors, like health, social education, co-operative, etc., other programmes were initiated. Slowly the relief of developmental effort began to change. In the beginning community development block was a major thrust of total development in a number of fields.

Slowly the programme under each of these various sectors became intensive. Here an important structural change came in. The community development block and the tribal development block programmes could not command their initial leadership role. In fact, they got routinised in terms of a specific programme which, it may be noted, was not their early frame. But in course of time, a schematic budget had defined their outer limits; therefore, the new programmes, which were undertaken, acquired an independent status. While the C. D. Block programme and the T. D. programme continued to be within the rigid limit of, say, an outlay of Rs. 2 lakhs or 3 lakhs per year, the other sectoral departmental programme slowly but surely continued to grow in size. The result was that the comprehensive programmes of tribal development and C. D. got reduced in size and lost significance in the scheme of overall State effort for development. Thus, what was supposed to be a comprehensive programme became a routine programme of a special category. Therefore, this programme lost its centrality, and the other programmes began to unfold themselves, according to the priorities which they could acquire at the national level.

15. The above is a picture of the general developmental scene in the country. Let us see what happened in the tribal areas during this phase. The tribal areas generally lie deep in the hills and forests, and are backward. Therefore, their problems are not always clearly appreciated by the various sectoral authorities. There is a certain amount of uniformity at national level or State level sectoral programmes. Therefore, by the very nature of things in tribal areas, many a time the programmes were not of much relevance to their problems. If a programme is not relevant to an area, there is naturally some resistance to it. On the other hand, because of the difficult phy-

sical conditions, even the extension agency could not effectively cover these areas. Therefore, the pace of the various programmes was rather tardy.

16. Another factor which influenced the pace of development in the areas has been the frequent change in the structure of the programmes in various sectors taken up at different levels. By the time a programme reached the more backward areas with considerable time lag, many a time, there were some amendments and the tribal areas had to await yet another cycle. On the other hand, as already stated, even the T. D. Block Scheme became schematic and the programmes got routinised and they continued like that owing to the fact that the initial flexibility of C. D. and T. D. was lost.

17. There was yet another difficulty in the T. D. Block programme. The area of T. D. Block was too small. These blocks were phased over a period of time. In this process, a coherence for the tribal region as a whole, or even for the scheduled areas, never emerged. Even in predominantly tribal areas certain blanks were left out. Therefore, no viable area emerged, which could be taken care of in a systematic fashion. Given a very small area and a package programme, it was not possible for the functionary at that level to use his discretion. And this was another important reason which resulted in schematic rigidity in the tribal areas without the emergence of a clear perspective of tribal development in the country.

18. The T. D. Block programme was taken up only in those areas which had more than 2/3rds tribal population. Therefore, a large number of areas which had more than 50 per cent tribal population still remained uncovered. By the end of the Third Five-Year Plan there were about five hundred Tribal Development Blocks in the

country when this programme was reviewed. The conclusion was that although there was some impact in these areas, yet it was clear that much remained to be done. It was, therefore, recommended that the effort in the tribal areas should be consolidated. Thus one more stage of five years of intensive development was added to the existing blocks. There was practically no geographical expansion of this programme during the Fourth Five-Year Plan. Thus, about 39 per cent of the tribal population could be covered at the end of the fourth Plan under 504 T. D. Blocks dotted over the country here and there. It is at this stage that the whole policy of T. D. Blocks was reviewed on the eve of the Fifth Plan formulation.

19. Before we discuss the new strategy it will be useful to have a closer look at the background. The Committee on Plan Projects appointed by the Planning Commission (The Shilu Ao Committee) comprehensively reviewed the T. D. Block programme during the currency of the Fourth Plan. The Government of India set up an informal Expert Committee in 1972 to go into this entire question of tribal development. The Expert Committee provided the basic frame for further policy formulation. In the meantime, the Planning Commission set up a Task Force to examine the Welfare of the Backward Classes for suggesting programmes for the Fifth Five-Year Plan. This Task Force considered various aspects of tribal development and spelt out some further details for the new effort. Based on these two basic documents, an approach to the Fifth Five-Year Plan was outlined. This broad frame was formally accepted in 1973 by the National Development Council as a part of the Draft Fifth Five-Year Plan. Thus, gradually a decision was taken to prepare a Plan within a Plan for the tribal areas which is now known as the 'sub-plan' or the tribal sub-plan.

## The New Strategy

20. In the Scheme of the new strategy for tribal development, the first notable point is that we are trying to look at the problem of the development of the entire tribal community. This is in contrast with the position which prevailed for a decade when 'tribal development' became almost synonymous with the programme of T. D. Blocks. Whenever any problems arose the stock solution was the extension of T. D. Block programme, not withstanding the fact that only 39 per cent of the tribal population was covered by it and that its limit was prescribed by the schematic out-lays. Therefore, it is practically for the first time that a systematic effort has now been made in the new strategy to define a conceptual frame for the entire problem of development. Accordingly, the tribal problem has been divided broadly in terms of two distinguishable groups, viz., (i) tribals living in areas of concentration and (ii) dispersed tribals. The areas of concentration have also been defined in a simple way, i.e., any area having more than 50 per cent tribal population is regraded as an area of tribal concentration. The remaining population is defined as dispersed. For defining areas with more than 50 per cent concentration, the basic unit has been taken as a *Taluk/Tahasil*, i.e., a revenue unit of a district. Initially, it was suggested that a district may be taken as a unit for this purposes. But it was found that it resulted in bringing in large non-tribal areas within the sub-plan, notably in Gujarat. A district as a unit has since been discarded, and a *Tahsil* has now been taken as basic unit. The next smaller unit eligible for inclusion in the sub-plan is a block. Thus all *Tahsils* and all blocks having more than 50 per cent tribal population have been considered as areas of tribal population for defining the sub-plan areas.

21. Besides these 2 broad groups defined on the basis of concentration, the third group has been recognised as a special category. It is the pre-agricultural tribal communities generally at food-gathering stage. The tribal folk of the Koraput district of Orissa and those of Jenu Korhas of Karnatak belong to these groups. Their problems require special consideration. For each of these groups separate programmes will have to be prepared with reference to the situation of each of them. Thus the tribal problem has been divided broadly into three categories.

## District Approach for Different Groups

22. Now, in case of the first category of areas with tribal concentration, the approach should be simpler, in a way. Subject to local variations, it can be said that the tribals generally continue to have a command over the resources in those areas. Again, subject to local variations, in the areas of tribal dispersal either the tribal has lost the land or he has come out to the areas of the adjoining regions after the loss of his land in the original dwelling-place. For example, in the case of Bastar in M. P., the tribesman is generally a land-owner, but in the case of Dhanbad in Bihar, where the tribal population is only 30 per cent he has lost his land and he is generally a landless labourer. How a conscious decision has been taken about the problem in the areas of tribal concentration needs appreciation. The problem of the dispersed tribal groups is much more difficult because the tribal people have no control on the means of production. In any administrative strategy the easier problem has to be tackled first. The advantage of experience can be made use of in dealing with the more difficult problem. In the first case what we have to do urgently is to check the processes which are leading to a situation where the tribal is becoming

landless. In the latter case, we have to reverse the process. Either we must put him back in possession of his land or provide him with a new vocation and rehabilitate him. Prevention is always easier.

23. The second important point is that in the areas of tribal concentration we can generally adopt an area development approach. In these areas infrastructure is not well-developed. Here the task before us is somewhat simpler. What we have to do is that while looking at the problem of the area as a whole, special attention is to be given to the tribal problems. Thus, our approach to the development of the areas of tribal concentration can be put as a general area development approach with focus on the problems of the tribal community. Any programme which may be taken up in these areas has to ensure that the benefits reach the tribal community.

### **Dispersed Tribal Communities**

24. Let us briefly review our approach to the area of tribal dispersal. We have to approach the problem in a selective fashion. We find that in the case of some States like West Bengal or the three Southern States, or even the plains of tribal occupations in Assam or Tripura, there are no substantial areas of more than 50 per cent tribal concentration of block which are taken as the smallest unit. We have, therefore, decided that in these States different models could be tried for tackling the problem of dispersed tribal population. These States may bring forth appropriate answers in due course.

25. If we peruse the statistics of the areas of tribal concentration, we find that in most of the States including Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh,

and Himachal Pradesh about 70 per cent of the tribal population is covered by the new sub-plan. The dispersal of the tribal population is marked in the case of Maharashtra or Assam or Tripura. In these 3 States, if a Tahsil or a 'block' is taken as the smallest unit for special attention, we may be able to cover about 25—35 per cent population only. West Bengal tribal population is much more dispersed. Only 3 per cent of the total tribal population will be covered under this definition. Similar would be the case with the three Southern States. The Government of India have, therefore, relaxed this criteria in the case of these States. Maharashtra has adopted a unit of 20—25 thousand population. Similarly, in Assam a smaller area is being tried as a unit. In Tripura and West Bengal we have gone still lower.

26. Thus, certain basic departure has been made from the approach to the problem of tribal development in states having different types of population distribution. In this way our understanding of the problem of the areas of tribal dispersal will become better and we can approach other areas in a similar way. This description gives a broad picture of the geographical coverage under the new strategy. It is hoped that we will be covering about 70 per cent of the total tribal population in the country under the new programme. It may be noted here that those States and Union Territories have been excluded from this sub-plan approach where the tribal population is more than 50 per cent. For example, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, and Nagar Haveli are not included in this scheme on the ground that these State and Union Territories, as a whole, can be deemed to be the areas of tribal concentration which is being carved out under the new strategy, that is, the sub-plan. The plan of Nagaland or the Plan of



Lakshdweep should be a total plan of that area. Earlier even in Lakshadweep Plan there used to be a welfare of Backward Classes Sector as a separate item. When the bulk of the population in a state is tribal, there is no place for a backward classes sector. The whole plan of Nagaland is a tribal development plan. If it does not basically address itself to the problem of tribal development, it would need a drastic restructuring.

### **Role of Sectoral Authorities**

27. Another distinguishing feature of the new strategy is the definition of the role of sectoral authorities. So long, the development of the tribal folk was almost synonymous with what was being done under the backward classes sector. Whatever was provided through the T. D. Block or through the Director of Tribal Welfare, was considered as tribal development. Under the new approach in the areas of tribal concentration, or the sub-plan area tribal development is not defined in terms of any sectoral programme. Tribal Development here means the sum-total of all efforts of whatever organization is operating in the area, whether it is the State or the co-operative, whether it is the private sector or the public sector. Thus, the sub-plan, as a concept, is even more refined, compared with the conceptual frame of the State Plans. It may be noted that the State Plans represent the effort of the State sector and do not include the Union Government's effort or the role of the public sector enterprise. But the tribal sub-plan has 4 elements, viz. (i) the share from the State Plan Sector Outlays; (ii) the effort of the Central Ministries; (iii) the institutional finance flowing into these areas; and (iv) a comparatively small special assistance of Union Government for tribal development in these areas. Thus, the sub-plan effort is qualitatively and

entirely different from the programmes which have been taken up so far under the names of Tribal Development Block and Tribal Development Agency. As the new effort in the sub-plan represents the total effort, the earlier compartmental approach is sought to be done away with. It is the totality of the problem which has to be taken note of in these areas under the new approach.

28. As soon as we set our goal as the total development in the region, an important question about the overall responsibility of tribal development arises. In a district like Koraput, which is predominantly tribal, no single department can assume this responsibility. It is the entire administrative machinery which is responsible for the tribal development. The District Agricultural Officer is responsible for agriculture, the District Educational Officer for education, and so on and so forth. No sectoral authority can disown the responsibility of the development of these areas. As a corollary of this basic premise, we have requested the Union Ministry of Agriculture at the Union Government level to identify the problem of tribal areas and to spell out the strategy of their agricultural development. Since the Ministry is responsible for the Agricultural Development they have to quantify their own effort. In this way each sector has also to define the problems of the tribal areas. They have to examine whether some changes in the new programmes which they have formulated to meet the requirements of the tribal areas are necessary or whether the programmes are to be implemented as they are. Therefore, the main responsibility for the tribal areas is that of the respective sector. The Tribal Welfare Department will have the role of a co-ordinator rather than an executor of specific

programmes. This is the most important departure in the new strategy from the past practice.

### **Need of the tribal, the only reference point**

29. Coming to the substantive part of the new strategy, we have in a way gone back to the old C. D. Philosophy. The basic question is how to put it on a sound basis. The new effort represents total developmental effort in the area. We are not interested in individual schematic programmes. Whenever we deal with more backward people there is always a possibility of intermediate goals displacing the final goals. The programme, particularly its outer form, may become the main focus of attention and the development of the tribal may recede into background. Therefore, we are not defining the programmes at the national level in specific schematic terms. According to us, whatever is necessary for the development of the tribals in a particular area in our programme. Many do not approve this. After all, who is there to define this and assume the responsibility? In our view, we have experimented far too long with centralised planning. Here formal approaches invariably emerge. The tribal scheme is so varied and different that there has to be maximum flexibility. This is a must. We may blunder in some areas but discretion must vest in the field level and the programme should be evolved with reference to the problem of the area.

### **Basic Geographical Unit for Planning**

30. With this end in view we have tried to define the area of reference. A Tribal Development Block would have been too small a unit for the purpose of planning. We did not start with a rigid definition for the area. Since a Tribal Development Block is too small a unit, a group of

blocks was suggested as the starting-point for defining this unit. Conceptually we have further added that the project area should be defined keeping in view its geographical features, ethnic composition, level of development, etc. It appears that from the standpoint of practical considerations all through the country a subdivision or a Tahsil generally emerges as a unit for planning. This is the area of operation for which the plans have to be prepared. These programmes have to be prepared for the development of the tribal in the broadest sense. There is no formula for programmes to be taken under these projects. We are quite aware that the strategy did not succeed in the community development blocks; these turned out to be yet another set of unsuccessful schemes. But there was nothing wrong with the basic approach. Some mistakes were committed and we have to learn from them.

### **Special Groups**

31. There are certain special areas which will particularly need the attention of the planners. Some tribal groups are at pre-agricultural level of technology. Hunters and food-gatherers require a different approach. We have requested the States to identify these groups for whom separate allocations have been kept. The other important group which should be identified is the zone of influence of industrial and mining complexes. We cannot have the same approach for the hinterland of Bailadila, Ranchi and a region predominantly agricultural. Big urban centres, industrial localities and mining areas have to be identified. Similarly, other special features of each specific area should also be identified. For example, a rich forest area requires a different approach compared with one where there is no forest.

## Formal Structure of the Programmes

32. Another important aspect is the categorisation of different programmes under plan and non-plan or under developmental and regulatory activity. These captions do not have much relevance in the tribal areas. Categorisation is very neat and tidy at the higher levels. However, by the time one reaches the field these refinements lose their meaning. Take the case of regulatory and developmental functions in tribal areas. If the tribal is being deprived of his land, his first requirement is protection against land alienation and not provision of an irrigation well. If no action on the issue of land alienation is explained in terms of functional specialization, no tribal will be convinced. He has to be told in clear terms what is to be done. Therefore we are trying to say that when, in the new project, a total picture of the tribal requirements emerge what we propose to do about them should be stated clearly. Thus, let us sort out at the higher levels as to which aspect can be entrusted to which compartment. But at the field level it should all appear as one programme and in manner which is meaningful to the tribal. Unless we depart from the past practice of compartmentalisation and try to test everything with reference to the problems of the tribal, something or the other would be found missing. Such programmes will have no chance of success. These aspects have been clearly brought out in the guidelines for preparation of sub-plans by the Planning Commission.

## Priorities in the New Programme

33. Having thus reviewed the broad frame, let us spell out in specific terms the basic elements of the new strategy. In the first instance, the priorities have been clearly laid down for these areas.

Thus, elimination of exploitation is accorded the highest priority in the new strategy. All forms of exploitation have to be attacked if a dent has to be made in the tribal situation. For this purpose we have not only to see the exterior but we have to start examination of various processes from within. An outstanding example of exploitation is the system of liquor vending in the tribal areas. Forest Policy represents another area of friction between the tribal and the lower bureaucracy. These anomalies should be removed. The Government is committed to this in principle. It is for us to give it a formal shape.

34. Another area of exploitation is private money-lending and marketing activity. It is quite clear from the experience of the tribal areas that if we can tackle one item, viz., marketing, that itself will effectively increase the income of the tribal by not less than 50 per cent. There is no other developmental programme, whether minor irrigation or improved seed, which can ensure for every tribal 50 per cent increase with almost no investment. It will require a modest amount as seed money. The present margins are so high that even after meeting the establishment cost it is possible to increase the income of the tribal by 50 per cent or so. If we can provide relief to the tribal from the money-lender, it could be considered as a day of deliverance for the tribal economy. A rate of interest up to 75 per cent may be normal, he may be required to pay even up to 300 per cent in some cases. Thus, debt redemption, money lending and marketing are the most important areas which will need immediate attention.

35. Another well-known problem is that of land alienation, and bonded labour. While attack on indebtedness will help the tribal in future against

bondage and alienation, the present situation will also need to be helped urgently. All these programmes will need to be fully co-ordinated. If we do not free him from the obligations of the money-lender, all developmental programmes will surely help the parasite. At present it is generally the parasite which is getting nursed. This relationship, which has developed through the years, has to be broken, otherwise no programmes will help the tribal. In fact we feel that the first phase of the new effort in the tribal areas should be in the nature of a first-aid operation. The tribal economy has been badly mauled by the vested interest, by the traders, by the money lenders, by contractors. Its rehabilitation is the first basic task which has to be undertaken.

### Unequal Contract

36. Another aspect of the new strategy is that of building up inner strength in the community. All elements sought to be covered by the programmes aimed at elimination of exploitation will have no long term impact unless there is a simultaneous effective programme to enable the community itself to understand the new processes and meet the new situation on terms of equality. With the opening up of the areas two unequal systems come in contact. Tribal tradition is basically an oral tradition. It is based on trust. But what is the basis of our modern system? It is the written agreement which prevails. Abstract concepts govern the relationships. The tribal is definitely at a disadvantage, because of his inability to comprehend a system in which even a word has a double meaning in a dubious fashion. Our programmes of elimination of exploitation will have only a limited impact unless we attend to this aspect.

37. Education assumes a crucial role in these areas. But we may not be

able to achieve universal education in the next four years. On the other hand, the question remains unanswered, viz., if even elementary education is not provided to the tribal, how we are to expect that he will be able to stand the pressure of the new situation. In the fast-changing situation of the present times we cannot wait till a new generation which is reading in the primary and secondary schools comes of age and provides the new leadership. There are areas where the tribal population is almost at zero-literacy level. In the Korta Project of Bastar district literacy was 2.8 in 1961 and 2.6 in 1971. How can we improve matters in this respect? Let us have special programmes of citizen education. The tribal must be told about the new prospects which are there. How has he to make use of the new institutions? We must strengthen his traditional institutions which he understands. He is able to manage his own affairs and he does not want interference from outside. He is competent to manage the affairs of his society. In stead of expecting the tribal to change in no time, simply because we want to start a new Agency, we should try to change our own systems, make them so simple that he can understand them.

### Priorities in Developmental Programmes

38. The priorities in the common developmental programmes have also been assigned. Let us take up those programmes which are comparatively small, easier to execute and which can be extended to a large number of persons easily. The level of technology must be such that it may be within the comprehension of the people. This is a very important constraint. The same observations apply to administrative structure as also to the credit-cum-marketing organizations.

## Administration

39. It is not possible for me to deal with these aspects in detail here. I would, therefore, touch upon them very briefly. There is one important function which must be appreciated. The level of communication between the administration and people in the tribal areas is very poor. There is lack of faith. This is a statement of fact. It is not a matter of opinion. The tribal considers administrators, money-lenders, traders, contractors, etc., on the one side and he himself and his community on the other. We will have to find out the reason for this situation, as they are quite simple. In their eyes all of us belong to one group. Unless we bridge this confidence-gap no programme can succeed. Therefore in every programme which we take up in these areas we have to be very careful about our promises and actual performance. There are so many organisations which are operating in these areas. Each organization views the problem in its own narrow frame. Each one may do its bit, yet the tribal may not get the benefit, because someone may have defaulted. Every one is right and demands his due, yet no one is responsible for the loss. In the tribal situation, the administrative

system should function as one unit. Before any liability is passed on to the tribal it must be ensured that he gets the benefits. In the simple tribal situation, we have to start with the promise that what the tribal says is right unless otherwise proved.

## Conclusion

40. I have tried to give a brief resume of the new strategy. Many aspects will require considerable elaboration. In relation to the tribal development no final word can be said. We are still searching for answers to numerous problems which have come to our notice. The main question is how to put all these concepts on the ground, steer clear of the procedural cobwebs, and attack directly the problem. This is the basic issue before us which can be sorted out only when everyone amongst us can begin to think from the tribal's point of view. Only then we will be able to appreciate his difficulty. The touch-stone of every programme cannot be its conformity to certain patterns, rules or procedure. The crux of it is the fact as to whether it helps the weakest groups of our society. This can be the surest guide of our new effort.

TRIBAL.....

DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL POPULATION IN INDIA (1971)

Andhra Pradesh	..	16.58	(3.81)
Assam	..	16.07	(10.98)
Bihar	..	49.33	(8.75)
Gujarat	..	37.34	(13.90)
Himachal Pradesh	..	1.42	(4.09)
Karnataka	..	1.31	(0.79)
Kerala	..	2.69	(1.26)
Madhya Pradesh	..	83.87	(30.13)
Maharashtra	..	29.34	(5.86)
Manipur	..	3.35	(31.18)
Meghalaya	..	8.14	(80.48)
Nagaland	..	4.58	(88.61)
Orissa	..	50.72	(23.11)
Rajasthan	..	31.26	(12.13)
Tamil Nadu	..	3.12	(0.76)
Tripura	..	4.51	(28.94)
Uttar Pradesh	..	1.99	(0.22)
West Bengal	..	35.23	(5.71)
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	..	0.18	(15.72)
Arunachal Pradesh	..	3.69	(79.01)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	..	0.64	(86.38)
Goa, Daman & Diu	..	0.08	(0.89)
Lakshadweep	..	0.30	(92.35)
Mizoram	..	3.13	(91.26)
India	..	380.15	(6.94)

Figures in bracket represent percentage of tribal population to total population of the State

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# The Social Life of the Paraja

RAMA CHANDRA ULAKA

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The Paraja are one of the main tribes of Orissa. Compared with other tribal communities they show some differences in respect of their pattern of settlement, manners and customs, and cultural configuration. The dress and adornments of the Paraja and the ornaments used by their women are of special types. They like to remain aloof from the people of the other communities and feel shy of them. Free mixing and frank conversation with outsiders are not their custom.

The Paraja houses are of one type for all, irrespective of economic or social differences among them. The houses of different families are built in isolation from one another, and there is only one entrance to each dwelling-house. No exit is provided at the back of the house. Thus the front door of the house serves both as entrance and exit. The hearth, granary, abode of the family deity, and place for sleeping are all inside the house. All the members of a family irrespective of age sleep on floor inside the house. For want of space the use of cot is rare. According to their economic status the Paraja are divided into two sections: the *Boda Paraja* and *Sana Paraja*. The former class of people are more prosperous and progressive than the latter. Though they lack education and are steeped in superstition, the Paraja are simple, hard working, tolerant and hospitable.

There are mainly two important places in each Paraja village. One is known as *Berana Munda* and the other *Nisani Munda*. A constellation of some circular stone slabs lying at the centre of the village is called *Berana Munda*. The Paraja denote this place as *Munda Dand* which lies in front of the house of village headman. The people of the village gather at *Berana Munda* or village assembly and discuss matters relating to the village and the festivals observed in the village. The village sanctuary in which the deity called *Hundidevata* is installed is called *Nisani Munda*. It is made of stone slabs and encircled by *Mendirs* which are fixed erect on the ground round the shrine. *Hundidevata* consists of an earthen pot and a chopping tool made of iron and an iron pole which is fixed into the ground ever since the village was established. The iron pole is kept fixed and undisturbed in its original position. But the earthen pot and the iron chopper are replaced with new ones thrice in a year, once in the month of *Srabana* (*Bandapana Bana*), and once either during any *Nuakhia* (new rice eating) ceremony or just before *Chaita Parba*, and finally at the end of the year in accompaniment with proper rituals and ceremonies. The main element of the ritual complex consists of offering to the deity of animals such as fowl, goat and pig which are sacrificed with the help of the new iron chopper.

In each Paraja village there is a dormitory for unmarried youths (*Dhangada Basaphar*) and a dormitory for maidens (*Dhangadi Basaphar*). The boys and girls spend the night in their respective dormitories and dance together at the village assembly (*Berana Munda*). They meet freely at *Berana Munda* and almost every evening keep themselves busy there in singing songs of question-answer type (*Laga Gita*) in competition with one another. This is the best occasion for them to communicate and exchange their ideas and feelings with one another through the media of love songs. The music and dance which accompany the song-competition make the whole situation most attractive, and such good activities culminate in match-making leading eventually to marriage between lovers. When the boys and girls feel tired by continuous dancing and singing they retire to their respective dormitories for rest.

The office-bearers of the administrative structure of the Paraja village are *Jani*, *Muduli*, *Chalan*, *Disari*, *Gania*, *Guru Main* and 'Bhatanayak'. *Jani* is the village headman-cum-priest, and he is the custodian of religious articles. *Muduli* is another chief of the village, and he is in charge of all affairs concerning the village. The posts of these two headmen are hereditary. *Chalan* is responsible for intimating the decisions of *Jani* and *Muduli* to the people and coercing and persuading them to follow these decisions. Determining auspicious moments for observing rituals and giving names to new-born babies are the functions of *Disari*. He is more or less an astrologer in Paraja village. *Gania* is a sorcerer-cum-medicine man. He tries to cure the illness of people by uttering incantations and applying herbal medicines. *Guru Main* is the priest whose duty is to worship the village goddess on the occasion of rituals or festivities. His good offices include

offering of prayers to village goddess at the time of illness of some persons of her village for recovery. Generally, a Paraja woman works as *Guru Main Bhatanayak* is an important person in a Paraja village. He has to purify those who are ostracised for having committed certain socially disapproved acts or for suffering from ritually polluted conditions. Some of the ritually defiling acts and conditions are cow-slaughter, injury or wound caused by the attack of a tiger, formation of maggots in sore of the body and illness and suffering caused by any contagious disease. The concerned person who is a victim to these sufferings is shut out from the society and until he is made free from ritual pollution by undergoing purificatory rites prescribed by the village *Bhatanayak* he is not readmitted into the tribe. In addition to the purificatory rituals the out-caste has to contribute a pig, a goat, three fowls and some money and rice to the village feast which is arranged by all people of the village on this occasion.

The processes of ritual purification include the following steps. The village *Bhatanayak* takes the out-caste to the confluence of the rivers or hill streams and shaves his head clean. Thereafter he sprinkles over him cowdung diluted in water, and bathes him in the river. After he is bathed, he touches a hot gold ring with his tongue. These actions are believed to make the concerned person ritually clean and help him in getting himself admitted into his society. *Bhatanayak* receives a piece of new cloth, five rupees, half a kilogram of rice and half a kilogram of ragi from the concerned person for his religious services. The last role which *Bhatanayak* has to play on this occasion is to eat first the rice cooked for the feast. At this time a five-rupee note is kept by the concerned person underneath the leaf-plate from which *Bhatanayak* eats his food in payment



of additional gift to him for the religious services. After *Bhatanapak* eats his meal, others present at the ceremony make full justice to the ritual feast.

The manner in which the Paraja women wear their clothes and ornaments is unique. Ten to twelve brass rings dangle from each ear. Similar rings also adorn the nose. If any Paraja woman does not wear such rings she faces serious criticism by the society and is subjected to severe humiliation at her mother's-in-law place. Therefore, every Paraja woman, whether rich or poor, is very much particular about wearing the ear and nose rings. A Paraja woman exhibits a great skill in getting herself dressed and adorned. She forms the locks of the hair of her head into the shape of flat bun and uses a number of hair-pins on either side of the bun in order to keep it in position. This adds to the beauty of the manner of her hair-dressing. Besides, she uses silver rings, one round each finger of her hands. The old one-rupee or half-a-rupee silver coin is studded on each ring and all these rings, when worn round the fingers, make her look more handsome. She also likes to wear two or three chains of necklace made of coloured beads. She puts on plastic bangles of various colours in her wrist.

The Paraja woman adopts a special manner of wearing cloth. She uses three-fourths of her cloth to cover the portion from the waist to the knees and rolls the remaining one-fourth of the cloth round her breast and back and ties the end of the cloth by means of a knot which rests on the upper side of her left shoulder. The Paraja women are very fond of dancing and the manner in which they wear their clothes is adopted to it. It is their opinion that any alteration in their usual manner of wearing cloths creates obstacles in dancing. The traditional way of wear-

ing clothes is also very suitable for field work.

Though the Parajas lag behind in the sphere of education they are far advanced in respect of dance and music. The inborn histrionic talent with which they are endowed finds expression in dances and songs like *Dhemsu dance*, *Dundunga-dance* and *Lasa songs* (competitive songs). As soon as the Paraja boys play their stringed musical instruments in accompaniment to self-composed songs, all others, young and old, assemble together and get ready to dance. As a matter of habit, young girls, the matrons and the old women are grouped together separately according to age groups and start dancing. Competitive songs are generally sung at the time of marriage ceremonies and *Chaita festival*. The Paraja forget their woes of life and feel relaxed after hard work by devoting every evening to these recreational and cultural activities.

The Paraja are habituated to drinking a kind of drink called 'Landa'. Men and women alike are fond of drinking this wine in festivities. The process of preparation of lands is this. They soak ragi, *swan* and *jama* in water till they are germinated. Then they dry these up. After these are sufficiently dried up they are pulverized into flour. In the like manner rice is also pulverized. They mix the rice flour in water and make small balls out of these and then boil these in steam. Then they put the corn powder with the boiled rice balls in an old earthen jar and pour water into it, and keep it undisturbed. In three or four days the contents get fermented and turn into an intoxicant which is a great favourite drink of the Parajas.

There are three types of marriage noticed among the Paraja. They are called *Maga Marriage*, *Jhinka marriage* and *Pasnamundi marriage*. *Maga* type

corresponds to marriage by arrangement in which the marriage is settled by negotiation. Generally the arranged marriages are held in the month of Magha because all crops are harvested by this time, and food is available at home in plenty. In this case two or three persons on behalf of the bridegroom visit the house of bride's father. They carry a bamboo pole and some wine with them to the bride's village. Generally such visits take place in the month of Kartik. On reaching the bride's house the bridegroom's team keeps the bamboo pole inclined to the middle wall of the bride's house, and keeps hanging from it all the wine bottles which they carry with them. The bride's father makes enquiry as to the purpose of their coming. In reply the bridegroom's party reports that they have come for a *Malabar* or *Raibaria*. If the bride's father does not want to give his daughter in marriage to the particular boy he asks them to remove the bamboo pole from his house and indicates to the *Raibaria* or *Malabar* to take away the wine bottles. On the other hand, if the bride's father is in favour of the proposal he or the bride's brother accepts the wine bottles; and all present there including *Raibaria* drink the wine, and ask the *Raibaria* to come again. This is indicative of the consent of the bride's father to the proposal. Preparations are made by the bridegroom's party for the next visit to the bride's house. *Disari* is consulted and an auspicious Wednesday is fixed for the visit. On that day the *Raibaria* and the *Malabar* proceed to the bride's house. They carry with them a bottle of wine, some rice, *ragi* and money. The bride's father receives them and makes arrangements to entertain them and his village headman with wine. He mixes some wine with the wine brought by *Raibaria* and *Malabar* and invites the village headman to grace the occasion by his presence. He offers wine to the *Raibaria* and *Mal-*

*baria* and the village headman and discusses the negotiation with them and finally settles the matter.

An auspicious day is fixed for the next visit to the bride's house. This time the bridegroom himself goes to the bride's house accompanied by his relatives. According to the tradition the bridegroom's father pays some bride-price (*Jalla*) to the bride's father. While returning with the bride and before crossing the boundary of the bride's village the mother's brother of the bride is given a pig and some wine in token of gratitude shown to him. The bride's brother is also paid some thing which is known as *Safa khedia*. On reaching the groom's village the marriage is celebrated with great pomp. A curious type of gymnastic performance known as *Kumudamara* is arranged at the time of marriage in the Paraja society and it is performed by those who can afford it. In this case two long bamboo poles are set apart and fixed upright on the ground; and another pole is tied to them horizontally at a height beyond reach, and a water melon is kept suspended from it. The upright bamboo poles are anointed with castor oil and made slippery. The bride's party is given chance first to climb up and cut the melon with one stroke. If the bride's people come out successful in doing so, they are given a potful of wine (*Landa*) with some meat in recognition of their success in the feat. If the bride's party fails in doing so, the groom's party comes next to make an attempt at it. Success on their part means a reward of a pot of wine and some meat from the bride's party. In this exercise the defeated party gives a reward of fixed quantity of wine and meat to the winning party in recognition of its skill of performing the feats of valour.

If the parents of the bride and the parents of the bridegroom cannot afford to perform the marriage of their children by arrangement, marriage is held by capture (*Jhinka marriage*). A mediator (*Sutra kari*) acts as liaison between the bride and the groom. At the appointed place and time the friends of the bridegroom capture the bride and bring her to the groom's house by force. Generally the incident of bride-capture takes place at the weekly market or at the time of some festivals. In this case the groom makes a beginning by gently holding the hand of the bride and pulling her to his side. Thereafter his friends join and carry her to the groom's village. The curious element to be noted in this process of capture is that if the bride gives blows to the groom's friends it is indicative of her consent to the proposed marriage with the particular groom. After a few days some people of the bride's village visit the groom's village in search of the kidnapped girl. One of the search party acts as the leader of the party (*Khojbana*) and the others of the team accompany him as *Raibaria*. *Khojbana* is distinguished from *Raibaria* by his iron-plated bamboo pole which he carries with him on this occasion. They enter the groom's village on the plea of searching for their 'lost cow'. It is needless to say that the village involved in this capture is known much before the visit of the bride's people to this village. On reaching the village the party walks straight to the headmen and asks the chief of the groom's party in whose cowshed their 'cow' is tied. In reply the village *Muduli* informs them that their 'cow' has been confined in some cowshed and is given gruel and water properly and that there is no question now of returning it to the owner. The concerned person adds by saying that the price of the cow will be paid duly. On behalf of the groom the village *Muduli* assures the *Khojbana* of the payment of bride-price and asks him to come again some day to get it.

After a few days the bride's father sends intimation through the village *Chalan* to the groom's father about the day on which he proposes to visit his village. On that day the groom's father keeps things such as rice and wine ready for the feast. As soon as the bride's party including *Khojbana* arrives at the groom's village they are respectfully greeted and led into the groom's house. The married women of the groom's house come forward and in great submissiveness anoint the feet, knee, shoulder and fore-head of the *Khojbana* with turmeric paste mixed with water and then greet them with folded hands. After they are led to some one's cowshed where they all sit and start talking to each other, both the parties carry on arguments and exchange words with one another. At the end the bride's father receives the bride-price and with others of his team returns home satisfied. The last ritual to be observed in this case is to anoint turmeric paste on the body of the bride and the groom on an auspicious day fixed by the village *Disari* and solemnize the union.

The third type of marriage which is known as *Pashamundi* is equivalent to marriage by intrusion. As a prelude to such types of union song competitions go on days together among the boys and girls, and through the medium of competition feelings of love and affection are exchanged between different pairs of boys and girls. When the emotion of mutual attraction reaches its climax the girl takes initiative in this matter and proceeds to the house of the boy whom she loves most. On reaching his house she asks his mother for some rice or ragi gruel. The groom's mother knows already the implications of her request and therefore welcomes her and serves the gruel in a leaf-cup. After eating it the girl puts the leaf-cup underneath the water pot; and the boy's mother understands from this that the girl wants to become her daughter-in-law. She then confirms it by asking

the girl to fetch water in the jar given to her. The girl goes to the nearby hill stream or to any other source of water and fetches water and boils it. As soon as her prospective bridegroom arrives at home she anoints turmeric paste on his body and bathes him in tepid water. Sometimes later the groom's father informs the bride's father of it. The bride's father gets annoyed at the self-indulgence of his daughter in match-making and sends some of his relatives to the groom's house to get the bride-price instead of going himself for this purpose. On the day of payment of the bride-price the groom's father arranges a feast to entertain the bride's party and, as advised by the village *Disari*, the marriage is solemnized and consummated. The other terms used for such type of marriage are *Udulia* and *Paisamandi* marriage.

The Paraja take the help of an elderly woman at the time of child birth. *Gura Main* of the village is also asked to remain present at the time of delivery. The work of *Gurumain* is to light the lamp and burn incense and utter incantations. In spite of these measures if the delivery becomes painful and if any complications arise, then the sorcerer is sought and the necessary herbal medicines prescribed by him are administered. After the child is born umbilical cord is cut and the child is given a bath near the pit dug in the courtyard of the house for this purpose. The mother and child remain polluted until the navel cord dries up and falls off. The midwife who helps at the time of delivery is called home on the day on which the stump of the umbilical cord falls off and in her presence it is thrown into the pit, and incense is burnt and lamp is lighted near the pit which is then filled with earth. The midwife gets from the family some rice, *ragi*, turmeric and oil on this occasion, and thereafter the family undergoes purification of birth pollution.

When death occurs in a family two people carry the dead body to the cremation ground. These two people are called *Madadharia*. A potful of gruel is also taken along with the dead body. This gruel is known as *Pendchopa*. After the dead body is cremated the pot containing the gruel is pressed under a piece of stone in order to break it. All the things used by the deceased are thrown on the cremation ground. The relatives of the deceased family contribute one rupee each and with this they buy some wine which they drink together after taking a bath. To express mutual sorrow the people get their gruel from their respective families and dine together for one and a half day in the house of the deceased. On the second day they get house of the deceased cleansed and the clothes of the members of the deceased family are washed. The pall-bearers go to the cremation ground and collect the ashes into a heap and place three pieces of stone in a triangle on the ashes and lay a large piece of stone over them to keep the ashes covered. Then they go to the nearby river or hill-stream and catch some fish and reach the place where the clothes of the deceased family are washed. They take out their own clothes and wear some leaves of a tree called *Kan Kada Patar* and leave their clothes for washing. After the clothes are washed they throw away the leaf dress and wear the wet clothes and proceed to the house of the deceased with the fish caught from the river or the stream. On reaching the house they start cooking seven fistfuls of rice and fish and divide the cooked food into seven shares and make seven food packets with the help of *sat* leaves, and give these to the members of the family to eat. This food is known as *Pitakhia* or *Pitachhua*. Thereafter they collect all the cooking vessels, laddle, strainer, wood and ashes from oven and throw them near the cremation ground. In the evening a fowl is sacrificed at the

place where the person died; and some rice, *ragi*, money, oil and turmeric are given to the pall-bearers who in their turn anoint the oil and turmeric over their body and get themselves purified.

At night two people go to the cremation ground with a packet of cooked rice held suspended from a carrying pole and call aloud the deceased person by shouting his or her name and ask him/her to eat the cooked rice which represents *Pitabhat*. In the meantime some *ragi* flour is spread over a leaf-plate at the house of the deceased family and kept covered under a basket. No-body is allowed to remain present at that place. The members of the deceased family come out and stand outside their house. The pall-bearers soon return home and on their way back home keep uttering loudly the name of the *Bhagabat*. They also stand in front of the house of the deceased family. Some-one from inside the house asks the reason of their coming. At this the pall-bearers reply "We have brought happiness in place of sorrow." Thereafter the pall-bearers get into the house and scrutinize the *ragi*-flour kept covered therein. If any foot-print of a person is marked on the flour it is suspected that some sorcerers have eaten up the deceased person. If foot prints of any animal or bird are noticed, then it is believed that some deity has eaten up the deceased person. If no foot print is seen on the flour then it is believed that Yama or the god of death has taken away his life. On the third day the deceased family arranges a feast and invites all peoples of the village to partake of it. It is the tradition of the Paraja culture that every one in the village should take part in the feast. A family of moderate means arranges a modest feast on the third day as the last ritual of the death rites whereas a family of substantial means arranges a sumptuous feast in the month of Pausa or Magha on this occasion.

The term used by the Paraja for the soul is *Duma*. The soul of the person killed by a tiger is called *Bapha duma*. The places of residence of *Dumas* are those where death occurs as a result of falling from a tree or drowning in water, or falling down from a hill or attack by a savage beast in a cave. No one dares visit such a lonely place. If some-one is attacked any time by *Duma*, he or she takes the help of sorcerer or *Gurumain* to be free from its evil influences. It is the tradition that each Paraja family should solemnly invoke the spirit of the *Dumas* of the deceased members at the time of feasts and festivals and worship them first and perform necessary rituals on the occasion thereafter.

The Paraja observe different festivals in different months. In addition they observe a festival called *Raji Susti Paja* which is connected with heavenly bodies. If the '*jangia*' stars, or the '*Dhum ketu*' (the comet) or the *Uka* (falling star) appears in the sky the Parajas apprehend that the country will be seized with calamities and visited by famine and scarcity. Accompanied by the village *Gurumain* the people in different groups visit village after village and collect alms from different families. When these stars disappear they consult the village *Disari* who finds out an auspicious day in which the rice collected from the village is cooked and eaten by all people concerned. They also perform *Puja* for the Rain God, invoking *Indra* to give rain and protect the crops from the attack of beasts. During Solar and Lunar eclipse they offer prayers with the help of *Gurumain* and Sorcerers to the planets to rid them of their evil effects. The rites observed on this occasion are called *Rahu* and *Ketu* puja and the animals which are sacrificed to appease the planetary bodies are pigs, goats and fowl. At the time of eclipse herbal medicines are also collected.

The Paraja observe *Jhankar puja* or *Annaka puja* or *Dahani puja* in the month of *Margasira* as the Kandha Tribes do. On this occasion they use new laddles made of gourd in place of old ones which they dispose of as a part of the festival.

They observe *Laxmi Puja* or *Taku parba* in the month of *Ashara*. On the day which precedes *Srigundicha* the village Jani offers lamp and incense at *Nisani Munda* and sacrifices a fowl. The village Chalan keeps the people of the village informed of this festival on the previous day. Each household keeps its house and clothes clean, and performs the *Laxmi puja*. The village Jani brings a ragi plant from his own field after performing necessary rituals. Then, offering lamp and incense to the plant he sets it straight at 'Nisani Munda'. After performing necessary rituals there, the village Jani puts the plant in a basket and brings it to his house. During the transit of the plant from the *Nisani Munda* to the Jani's house people sing and dance and the village rings with the sounds. The ragi plant represents the goddess 'Laxmi' and the village Jani worships her by offering lamp and incense and vermilion. After the puja starts Jain's wife takes some turmeric powder and rice and marks these on the forehead of the persons who constitute the procession of transporting the ragi plant from the *Nisani Munda* to her house. The same process is repeated in each and every Paraja family which brings a ragi plant from its own field straight to its house where it is worshipped. The wife or daughter-in-law of the man who brings the plant marks turmeric and rice on his forehead.

As the last part of the 'Laxmi Puja' the Paraja perform *Taku Parba*. The village Jani prepares a cake by roasting mango kernel mixed with molasses and offers it to *Jhankar* goddess. Non-vegetarian meals are forbidden on this

occasion. But cakes are prepared on this day and offered to the *Jhankari* deity and eaten sumptuously. The *Taku Parba* involves heavy expenditure for about ten or eleven days. From the time the *Taku Parba* is observed, people spend their time in feasting and drinking, dancing and singing. After *Bahuda Gundicha* the Parajas offer again incense and lamp to the ragi plants already brought home previously. They keep them at the place where seeds of crops are stored. With this the *Laxmi Puja* as observed among the Paraja comes to an end.

The Paraja observe *Langaladhua Punai* or *Bandapana Parba* in the month of *Srabana*. Those who have ploughs observe this festival; and those, who do not have ploughs, observe it by only preparing cakes and eating them. On this day they clean their houses and stop all work relating to cultivation. They wash the ploughs, yoke and other agricultural implements in the nearby river and keep them clean at home. They also wash the equipment called 'Badam' which is used at the time of sowing seeds and keep inside it a crab. Thereafter they proceed to the forest and collect some flowers called *Baghanakhi*. They also bring from the forest a kind of tuberous plant called *Tainladandi* with its leaves and roots intact and some branches of *Bela* and *Amla* and keep all of these on the plough and yokes which are decorated with a kind of red earth called *gerumati*. They also cover the plough with a new piece of cloth. Thus they prepare several sweets and offer them to the plough, and the yoke *Badam*. At sunset, when the cattle return home, the headman of each family covers his body with the new cloth which is kept on the plough. The members move gently the flowers of 'Baghanakhi' on the cattle, and beat them with 'Tainladandi'. The significance of this ritual is that the cattle will not be attacked by tiger.

The next items of ritual concerning this festival are that the head of the household keeps their handful of cooked rice in the *Badam* in which the crab is kept and worship it by offering incense. Next day, the crab is released in the field and the cooked rice is sprinkled over the field. After this the people are engaged in eating and drinking and dancing and singing. Next day, the festival is brought to a close by soaking the tuft of grass in turmeric water and sprinkling it over the place.

*Nachani Parba* or *Bhoda Parba* is observed at the time of Dasha in the month of Bhadraba. The people clean their respective houses and start the ritual by cooking new rice or paddy leaves, A tamarind, a kind of tuber called taraga, is also used as a substitute in their respective houses. The villagers collect, according to their means, the articles of the rituals and sacrificial animals such as goat and fowl. They go out of the village, make a small shed thatched with the leaves of *Jamukoli* tree and sacrifice the animals there. Then they come back home and eat the cooked new rice with meat and wine. This is the end of the *Nachuni Parba*. The Paraja observe the festival of lights called "Dipabali Parba" either two days earlier or two days later than the due date of 'Deewali'. On this occasion, each household cooks a mixture of water-melon, *Jhudanga* and varieties of green leaves, and place some quantity of this cooked vegetables and green leaves on the roof and start worshipping the god of fire. Similarly, each family keeps some portion of the cooked vegetables and green leaves in the basket in which crops or seeds are kept, and then they start worshipping the goddess Laxmi. The other household articles on which these cooked materials are kept are mortar and pestle, grinding-stone and the loom. It is at this time that the family members pray that all the household belongings may be in use for all time. The broom-stick is also offered

with the cooked vegetables, so that it keeps the house clean all the time. In the like manner, they offer cooked vegetables and green leaves to all the agricultural implements and pray that all the agricultural operations may go on smoothly all the time. This is the occasion on which the *Dumas* of their agnates are remembered and offered food for their kindness in providing them with food and drink. At night each Paraja family kills a fowl and cooks it and eats the meat with wine.

The *Pusa Parba* comes in the month of Pausa. It is observed on the fullmoon day of this month. The Parajas exhaust in this month all the crops harvested in the month of Margasira. Each family disposes of almost all the agricultural produce such as paddy, *suon kantia*, *Alasi*, *Chili*, sweet potato, etc. at a cheap rate, and with the sale proceeds they buy new cloths for all the members of the family. The Parajas purchase winter-clothes in this month. It is noticed that the price of their agricultural produce goes down and the price of their daily necessities rises up in this month.

On the day of *Pusa Parba* each family finishes cleaning the house very early in the morning, and married women are busy with such work as grinding ragi and husking rice. The able-bodied adult male members of the village form into different groups and proceed to the forest to collect the required fuel for the following eight days. In the evening the married women walk to the river with their respective earthen pots and bring water called *Duma Pani* and install it at the shrine (Debata Gaudi) in their respective houses. At night they remember the *Duma* deity by sacrificing a fowl and offering incense and lamp at the shrine.

In the meantime fire is set to the big logs of wood piled up at the village assembly. All the people of the

village gather round the fire. The unmarried youths start playing their stringed instrument (*Dudunga*) and maidens start dancing in groups. After a few hours the youths and the maids under the guidance of their chosen leader (*Mala Dhangada*) start the work called *Pusachora*. The leader is to see that discipline is maintained among the youths and the maidens, and the meaning of *Pusachora* is that the young men and the young maidens get into the backyard or the garden of any family of the village and steal potato, pumpkin, cabbage, brinjal etc. unobstructed. Whatever vegetables they get by this method they roast them in the fire at the *Berana Munda* and eat them up with wine in great delight. The fire which is lighted at the *Berana Munda* is called *Mandukod*. In the meantime a fowl is sacrificed at the house of their chief and thereafter they dance and sing together and move from ward to ward in the village.

The *Landi* god is one of their most important deity who is believed to be appearing once every year to go round the dwelling-places of the tribe. The *Landi* songs are themes of devotion and tolerance, peace and order. All people of the Paraja community participate in the rituals concerning the *Landi* deity. The Paraja women with the village Jani spend the whole night at *Berana Munda* (*Mandukod*) on this occasion. On the second day all households of the village make cakes of *ragi* and *masi*, cook rice and meat and prepare curry and invite each other to their respective houses for partaking of the food. The unmarried women of the village get themselves busy with distributing the food stuff in each other's houses.

On the third day a community feast is arranged and all people of the village contribute rice, dal and vegetables for this feast. After everything is cooked the rice is served in

two big mats, one for the males and the other for the females. All men of the village sit around the mat and eat together. The women follow suit. Sometimes one feeds the other, and if some one refuses to eat and gets away, others follow him or her and bring him or her back to the place. The tradition of eating together and the songs concerning the *Landi* god reinforces fellow-feeling and *esprit de corps* among themselves. All intra-personal conflict and tension are forgotten on this occasion and all people get themselves bound together in a tie of affection, friendship and mutuality of obligation.

Next day, inter village visits take place among the relatives and friends. The visitors move from door to door and partake of whatever food and drink are served to them. The maidens collect some money from each other and arrange a feast and invite the unmarried youths of village to it. In the same way the unmarried youths reciprocate the custom. This kind of reciprocity also goes on among oldmen and women.

Feasting, entertaining and inter-village visits continue for four or five days, and during this time the family resources are almost exhausted, and the people become indebted to the itinerant money-lenders and merchants. On the last but one day which is called *Denamapa* all the households deposit their respective shares of 'Landa' wine in the courtyard of the village Jani. On this day they abstain themselves from drinking wine.

A symbolic episode takes place on the occasion to warn persons contemplating sexual offences. Imaginary sexual maniacs are brought to book in an interesting manner. A supposed scene of a man and a woman living in illegal relationship and of the social punishment inflicted on them is enacted thus. Three of the bachelors of the village tie long



strings to the legs of two fowls. All people, irrespective of age and sex, assemble at *Berana Munda*. The village *Jani* and *Muduli* are made to sit at *Berana Munda*, and the two fowls are tied to their legs. The offending couple who have already enjoyed marital life for three or four years, are summoned before the village *Jani* and *Muduli* and are fined one rupee each. With this amount some tobacco and *bidi* are purchased and all people get their respective share of it. The next item of work is to strip the wings off the dead fowl tied to the leg of the village *Jani* and dangle it to a bamboo pole. The significance of this action is that the community disapproves such moral lapses on the part of the unmarried boys and girls. It also means a vow of the latter before the elders of the village present at '*Berana Munda*' not to commit further sexual illegalities. The maidens get the wingless fowl and the village *Jani* and *Muduli* get the other fowl. At the same place the fowls are roasted and all people present there eat the meat with Landa wine. The night is spent in great merriment and thus the festival comes to an end.

Though the month of Chaitra is the first month of the year, it is the month of acute scarcity and it is needless to say that it is the end of all months. Whatever food stuff and financial resources are left over after observing different festivals held in previous months are exhausted at the time of Chaitra Parba, and the people become completely bankrupt.

The Parajas observe the new rice-eating ceremony in respect of *Mango*, *Mahua*, *Kandula* and many kinds of fruits and roots collected from the forest. They pay up all old debts and get new debts in this month. They are employed as labourers on annual basis from this month. Chaitra Parba is observed with great pomp in this month. This is how the festival is observed.

The day previous to the day of festival is the day of cleaning. Each family cleans its house and levels up the surroundings. In the evening the married women of the village carry vessels and go in a procession to the nearby river to fetch water (*Duma Pani*) in new earthen vessels. The water which is brought at an unearthly hour, in the midst of chanting of the name of the '*Dumas*', is called *Duma water*. They place these vessels at the altar of the deity of each family. At night the women cook rice and *dal* mixed together and offer it to *Duma water* with respect. All people, regardless of their economic status, wear new cloths on this occasion.

On the second day the women carry on the work of cleaning of their houses again, and proceed to the forest to collect some flowers and fruits including mango, *Mahua*, and plums. In every house plenty of rice, *dal* and curry are cooked and distributed extensively among the kith and kin. In the evening the unmarried youths start playing their *Dudunga* and the maidens join them in singing and dancing. The dancing and singing party moves from one ward to the other. While moving they receive from each household a handful of cooked rice and curry which they eat and in expression of their gratitude to all people of the village they entertain them with their dance and song. No drinking is allowed on this day. But chewing of tobacco or smoking of *bidi* is not forbidden. At this time the village '*jani*' goes from door to door and collects from each house some *Kandula* which he fries at *Nisani Munda* or *Jhankara Debi* after offering prayers and people are permitted to eat *Kandula*.

From the third day onwards community revelry starts. Food is cooked in every house and collected at *Berana Munda* and all people of the village eat together to their heart's content.

Except the village headmen, all other men go out on hunting as a matter of compulsion. If any one stays behind and does not take part in hunting, he is humiliated by the ladies of the village. They throw cow dung at him and force him out of the village. No one escapes such humiliation. It is the duty of the women to carry food into the forest for the hunters. In the meantime the young unmarried girls, who stay behind, go on singing so loudly that the locality is resounded with their music. On their way back home from the forest the married women collect varieties of flowers from the forest and on reaching the village they adorn the non-Paraja youths of the village with these flowers. If any outsider visits the village at this time the maidens of the village throw cow dung at him and canvas for contributions in a sweet persuasive manner.

Hunting goes on for three or four days during the Chaitra Parba. If they succeed they believe that they will reap a very good harvest in the current year. In other words, success in hunting signifies plenty and prosperity throughout the year. The animal that is killed during hunting is brought to the village and kept at *Nisani Munda* and the whole night is spent in dancing and singing. Next day the animal is cut into pieces. Thereafter a portion of meat is given first to the village headman and the remaining portion is distributed equally among all others of the village. In the evening the village Jani carries on some worship under the tree at the outskirts of the village. He carries in a leaf-cup rice cooked in his own house and hangs it from a tree and sacrifices a fowl. This is called, *Jani-*

Next day, the village Jani offers

Next day, the village Jani offers prayers at the *Nisani-Munda* after which the Chaitra-Parba comes to an end. After the village Jani arrives at the Nisani-Munda the villagers assemble at that place, each of them carrying

with him some crops in a winnowing fan. The village Jani mixes all the crops brought by the villagers, utters some incantation and scatters them around. While the Jani scatters the grains around the villagers lift each of their winnowing fans above and look up to see that some grains fall in their respective winnowing fans. Each of the villagers mixes some more seeds with those collected ritually and sows these in the fields. This is the time when the wife of the *Chalan* bathes the villages Jani and the village Disari with ash-mixed water. Thereafter the able-bodied adults of the village carry the village Jani on their shoulders from Nisani Munda to this house to the accompaniment of dance and music. This is the end of the Chaitra-Parba.

The tune, the lift of the song and the kinds of dance known to the Paraja community are various. They compose verses and set the tune of the dance and music in imitation of the manner in which the snakes crawl, the frogs jump, and the birds sing. The presence of mind and common sense of the Paraja are remarkable. They compose songs in conformity with different situations and apply rhythm appropriate to the music. The cloud, the wind, the ripples, the sound of the stream have considerably influenced the tune of their music. Living freely under the sky and in the recesses of the hills, the Paraja enjoy, without inhibition singing and dancing all the year round. It is true that the authors of the Paraja songs remain obscure, but their compositions are replete with life and pleasure, the mysteries of the dark hills, the grandeur of the forests and the sublimity of the sky. Their folk-songs and indigenous musical instruments are unique contribution. The life of the Paraja is clouded by poverty and indebtedness, on the one hand, and brightened by jollity and the spirit of comradeship, on the other. The true charms of community life are enjoyed by them.

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# Stereotypes of the Tribes of Along (Arunachal Pradesh) about some Ethnic Groups

N. PATNAIK

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## Introduction & Hypothesis :

This paper deals with a study of the psychological stereotypes of the tribes of Along in regard to 15 different ethnic groups of peoples, national and international. Stereotypes are "Pictures in our minds" formed of different social and ethnic groups. They are seen as cases of distorted perception. It is hypothesised that the respondents may have a favourable perception of those who are acceptable to them and unfavourable perception of those who are rejected by them.

Though Arunachal Pradesh (previously called NEFA) was kept by the British authorities in isolation as a policy of Administration, the tribes of this territory have had a fair degree of contact with the people of the rest of the country, particularly those of Assam and other neighbouring areas through trade and commerce, fairs and festivals. For example, the people of Arunachal Pradesh had very close commercial contacts with the Tibetans and the Assamese. The contact with the Assamese was much closer than that with the people of any other region of India. Such contacts between the Assamese and the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were mainly for the purpose of trade and commerce.

Though the inner line regulation forbidding free entrance into Arunachal Pradesh is still in force, many administrative reforms have been introduced in it since independence as though to suggest that no restrictions was at any time put upon free access to the state. According to the fifth Schedule of the Constitution a special type of Administrative machinery is in charge of developmental administration and peace and good Government of the territory. Various categories of officers and public servants from all over India are employed in different institutions such as the law-courts and the administrative centres, schools and training centres, hospitals and army camps, located in Arunachal Pradesh.

Recently the road communications have been developed making it possible for vehicular traffic and movement of people from place to place in the territory. Although there is no commercial plane service, the air-force operates its plane-service over the territory and makes landing at places for the purpose of airlift of the officers and public in emergencies, and for supply of provisions to inaccessible regions. Such facilities and avenues have enabled the tribes of Arunachal

Pradesh to come in contact with the administrators, medical officers, school teachers, business men, and police personnel. During the international confrontation between India & China which took place in the border area near the Mc Mohan line, the tribes of the territory had witnessed military operations, and this event must have created certain impressions in the mind of the people about military and army personnel. Thus, depending upon the nature and duration of contact with different occupational and ethnic groups the autochthons of Arunachal Pradesh have formed different pictures and impressions about them.

The purpose of this paper is to find out what type of stereotypes of the tribes of Along have about different ethnic groups with whom they have come in contact in the recent time and about whom they have some knowledge.

Along is the headquarters of the Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is well connected with the plains of Assam by a metalled road 140 Km. long. There are two high schools, one run by the Government and the other by Ram Krishna Mission. Percentage of literacy is higher here than what it is in other parts of the territory. This area is also commercially well-developed as the business market is monopolised mostly by the local people. The area is predominantly inhabited by the Gallongs who have a democratic attitude and who practise a type of polyandry unknown anywhere else. They are good orators and they have a retentive memory. A study of stereotype of the Gallongs is significant as it reveals the mental picture and perception of an important tribe of Arunachal Pradesh about a series of ethnic groups of both national and international origin.

### Sample of the Study :

The sample of respondents consists of 152 High School students, local officers, business men and local leaders, all of whom are tribal people. These respondents are economically well-off and they are all adults between the age range of 18 to 40 years. Most of the respondents are literate and multi-lingual.

### Procedure :

We administered schedules on stereotypes containing 93 positive and negative attributes. We presented the list of the attributes to each of the 152 respondents and allowed them time to go over the list and comprehend the issue and clear their doubts if any, and then select at least five attributes for each of 15 ethnic groups which in their opinion would most correctly describe the group concerned. We urged to place the serial number of attributes thus selected by them against the respective groups in order of importance. We made it clear to them that if the given attributes did not fully describe any of the groups included in the study they should feel free to use any other attributes of their own choice. The next thing which we asked the respondents to do was to arrange the 15 groups in order of preference for association. For the sake of explanation we may add that the placing of the selected attributes constitutes the trail method and the arrangement of the group in order of preference constitutes the preference method.

We analysed the responses in the same manner as was done by S. C. Panchbhai in his study of stereotypes. The procedure of analysis is quoted below :

"The unfavourable ratio (U-ratio) for a stereotype group has been

1. Panchbhai, S. C.—"The levels of regional and National Identification and intergroup relations among the Harijans and the Adminis." *J. Indian Anthropol. Soc.*, 2:75-83 (1967).

reduced by dividing the total number of unfavourable stereotype frequencies by the favourable ones given to that group by a sample. The favourable marks (F-marks) are found out by a scoring process in which the most preferred group gets as many marks as the number of groups, being arranged on the preference scale and with a gradual reduction by one mark the least preferred or the last placed secures only one mark."

#### Analysis :

The results of the attitudes and opinions arrived at through analysis are tabulated in three tables. Table, I gives the top five attributes which were more frequently checked than the others by the respondents. The percentage of respondents checking each of these attributes for each group have also been indicated.

In the table-I in each case we have arranged the 5 attributes one below the other according to the percentage frequencies, the highest frequency being at the top and the lowest at the bottom. Then we have arranged the groups in order of frequencies of the topmost attributes. The group whose first attribute recorded highest frequency has been mentioned as the number one in the list and the group having the lowest frequency of its first attribute has been mentioned as the number 15 in the list. The other groups have been listed in between these two groups in order of their respective frequencies.

This table shows that in respect of the Nepali, the Assamese, the Bengali, the Bihari, the Indian, the Marwadi, the Sikha, the Muslim, the Bangladesh people, the European Christian and the the Indian Christian the first attribute is always favourable whereas in the case of the Chinese, the Tibetan, the Tribals of the plains and the Bhutia it is unfavourable.

The percentage frequency of the first attribute in the case of the Nepali is the highest. This indicates that the Nepalis are well known to the tribal people of Along. In fact many Nepalis are serving as agricultural servants and wage earners in the farms of the tribal communities of Along and other areas of Arunachal Pradesh. Many of them have already settled down permanently in Along. The percentage frequency of the first attribute in the case of the Indian Christian is the lowest. The respondents could hardly suggest suitable attributes for them. This is perhaps due to their little contact with this group of people. As some kind of tribalism is in the offing the tribes of the whole territory in general and of Along and Pasighat in particular resent the proselytising activities of the Christians in the territory, and therefore, they are unfavourably disposed towards them. That the stereotypes of the respondents about the Indians in general are favourable is proved by the favourable attributes checked for them. This favourable attitude is being internalized gradually due to the impact of the developmental activities and administration of tribal affairs by the dedicated officers of national Government.

Table-I also give the percentage of the favourable and unfavourable attributes in respect of the first five attributes given by the respondents to each of the 15 groups. We have used them for determining which groups are favourable and which are not favourable and to what extent. For the analysis of this problem we have divided the 15 groups into four categories according to their nationality and place of residence. The categories are as follows :

1. Groups of peoples of Indian Nationality residing in India : the Sikha, the Bengali, the Marwadi, the Assamese, the Tribes of the plains, the Muslim, the Biharis, Indian Christian.

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II. Groups of people of other Nationalities, resident in India : the Nepali, the European Christian, the Tibetan, the Bhutia.

III. Groups of people of foreign Nationality : the people of Bangladesh & the Chinese.

IV. People of India as a whole : Indians.

The 15 groups of peoples of the four categories are arranged in table 2 in order of favourableness unfavourableness as expressed by the respondents.

Table 1

(Stereotype attributes of different groups by 132 respondents of Along area)

Attributes	Percentage
1. THE NEPALIS	
Active	42.0
Drunkard	41.4
Dishonest	38.1
Hot-tempered	35.5
Brave	24.9
Favourable	40.0
Unfavourable	60.0
2. THE ASSAMESE	
Active	36.1
Literary	31.5
Friendly	28.3
Cultured	27.6
Looking	21.7
Favourable	100.0
3. THE BENGALIS	
Literary	34.8
Clever	30.2
Cultured	28.9

Attributes	Percentage
Intelligent	23.7
Friendly	21.0
Favourable	100.0

## 4. THE BIHARIS

Active	34.8
Backward	20.4
Industrious	19.1
Co-operative	18.4
Friendly	15.8
Favourable	80.0
Unfavourable	20.0

## 5. THE INDIANS

Friendly	27.6
Active	27.0
Co-operative	19.7
Cultured	16.4
Honest	13.1
Favourable	100.0

## 6. THE MARWADES

Economic	22.3
Clever	15.8
Cunning	15.1
Dishonest	14.5
Exploiting	11.2
Favourable	40.0
Unfavourable	60.0

## 7. THE SIKHS

Brave	21.7
Active	19.7
Hot-tempered	17.1
Industrious	11.2
Bold	8.5
Favourable	80.0
Unfavourable	20.0

Attributes	Percentage	Attributes	Percentage
<b>8. THE MUSLIMS</b>		<b>12. THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS</b>	
Economic	17.7	Good-looking	11.8
Cruel	12.5	Cultured	9.9
Hot-tempered	8.5	Religious	9.9
Aggressive	7.9	Adventurous	7.2
Exploiting	7.9	Exploiting	7.2
Favourable	20.0	Favourable	80.0
Unfavourable	80.0	Unfavourable	20.0
<b>9. THE CHINESE</b>		<b>13. THE TRIBES OF THE PLAINS</b>	
Dangerous	13.8	Backward	11.2
Aggressive	10.5	Active	10.5
Power loving	10.5	Brave	7.2
Active	7.9	Dishonest	5.9
Quarrelsome	7.2	Uncultured	4.6
Favourable	20.0	Favourable	40.0
Unfavourable	80.0	Unfavourable	60.0
<b>10. THE TIBETANS</b>		<b>14. THE BHUTIAS</b>	
Backward	12.5	Backward	11.2
Hottest	10.5	Active	7.9
Religious	10.5	Cultured	6.6
Friendly	7.9	Friendly	6.6
Gentle	7.2	Gentle	5.9
Favourable	80.0	Favourable	80.0
Unfavourable	20.0	Unfavourable	20.0
<b>11. THE BANGLADESH PEOPLE</b>		<b>15. THE INDIAN CHRISTIANS</b>	
Brave	12.5	Religious	8.5
Active	7.2	Clever	8.5
Friendly	6.6	Friendly	7.9
Clever	6.6	Disciplined	6.6
Disciplined	5.3	Cunning	5.9
Favourable	100.0	Favourable	80.0
		Unfavourable	20.0

Table 2

Groups of peoples across order of favourable-unfavourableness

Classes of people	F-100 Per cent U-20 Per cent	F-80 Per cent U-20 Per cent	F-60 Per cent U-20 Per cent	F-40 Per cent U-60 Per cent	F-30 Per cent U-30 Per cent	F-20 Per cent U-80 Per cent	U-100 Per cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
I	(a) Bengali ..	(a) Sikh ..	..	(a) Tribes of plain.	..	(a) Muslim ..	..
	(b) Assamese ..	(b) Indian ..	..	(b) Marwadi ..	..	..	..
	..	(c) Christian ..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	(d) Bihari ..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	(e) European- Christian.	..	(a) Nepali ..	..	..	..
	..	(b) Tibetan ..	..	..	..	..	..
	..	(c) Bhutia ..	..	..	..	(a) Chinese ..	..
III	(a) Bangladesh people.	..	..	..	..	..	..
IV	(a) Indian ..	..	..	..	..	..	..



Table 2 shows that the Bengalis, the Assamese, the people of Bangladesh and the Indians are the favoured groups because the five attributes which are attributed to them are all favourable. It clearly shows that the respondents have all positive stereotypes in their mind about these four ethnic groups. Next come the groups of people who have got 80 per cent favourable stereotypes. The Sikhs, the Indian Christians and the Biharis of the first category, and the European Christians, the Tibetans and the Bhutias of the second category fall in this group.

The groups of people about whom the respondents have checked more unfavourable stereotypes than favourable ones are the tribes of the plains, the Marwadis, the Nepalis, the Muslims and the Chinese.

In the favourable-unfavourable scale the Bengalis, the Assamese, the people of Bangladesh and the Indians have occupied the favourable position and the Muslim and the Chinese are in the unfavourable scale. The other

groups occupy different positions between them in the scale.

We have also analysed the problem of disposition of the respondents towards the ethnic groups under study by the methods of U-ratio and F-marks which are presented in the Table 3. From the table it is observed that U-ratio of 0.254 given to the Bengali shows the most favourable attitude towards them. On the other hand the U-ratio of 1.494 was given to the Chinese which shows a disposition of greatest disfavour towards them. In between those two groups fall the other ethnic groups of which the Assamese, the people of Bangladesh, the Indians, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians the Bihari, the European Christians, the Tibetans, and the Bhutias are within the range of favourable disposition in the decreasing order and the tribes of the plains, the Marwadi the Nepalis, and the Muslims fall within the range of unfavourable disposition in an increasing order. The Bhutia and the Marwadi groups occupy the middle position of the favourable and unfavourable scale.

Table 3

*U-ratios and F-marks given to different groups by 152 respondents (Educated & Uneducated leaders only)*

Groups		U-ratio	Ranks on ratios	Ranks on marks	F-marks	Groups
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Bengali	..	0.254	1	1	69.1	Assamese
Indian	..	0.313	2	2	60.2	Indian
European Christian	..	0.388	3	3	60.1	Bengali
Sikh	..	0.441	4	4	39.5	Bihari
Bangladesh people	..	0.475	5	5	29.3	Nepali

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Groups	U—ratio	Ranks on ratios	Ranks on marks	F—marks	Groups
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Tibetan ..	0.491	6	6	23.6	Sikh
Assamese ..	0.625	7	7	19.7	Bhutia
Bhutia ..	0.659	8	8	17.3	Marwadi
Marwadi ..	0.705	9	9	17.2	Bangladesh people
Bihari ..	0.770	10	10	14.6	Tibetan
Indian Christian ..	0.813	11	11	13.6	Indian Christian
Tribes of plains ..	0.884	12	12	11.4	Tribes of plains
Nepali ..	1.275	13	13	10.1	European Christian.
Muslims ..	1.330	14	14	8.8	Muslims
Chinese ..	1.494	15	15	4.3	Chinese

Ranks—Correlation between ranks obtained by U—method and ranks obtained by F—method is 0.504.

The results of the F—mark given to the different ethnic groups conform more or less to those of the U—ratio. They correspond in respect of the Indians, the Indian Christians, the Tribes of the plains, the Muslims and the Chinese groups which are given the second, eleven, twelve, fourteen and fifteen ranks respectively in the F—marks. Out of these groups the Indians are almost at the top in the favourable disposition and the Muslims and the Chinese are at the lowest in the unfavourable disposition. Though the Bengalis secured the first rank in U—ratio being least unfavourable and the Assamese occupied the first rank in the F—marks being most

favourable group, their U—ratio and F—marks correlation is weak.

Because of the small sample of the study it is difficult to generalize the issue for the entire subdivision of Along. Moreover, the study is confined mostly to the educated people with complete exclusion of the rural people. In view of these limitations the picture that emerges from this study may not be applicable to the entire subdivision of Along. A similar study of wider coverage in the subdivision may bring out a representative picture of stereotypes of the people of the study area about the different ethnic groups in question.

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# Disintegration of Leadership among the Oraons of Sundargarh district of Orissa

BHAGIRATHI CHOWDHURY

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Since the Oraon migrated from Chotanagpur in Bihar to the Sundargarh district and other adjoining areas of Orissa the pattern of leadership among them has undergone considerable change. This sort of transformation is of much historical and sociological importance. The impact of modernity and the effect of altered environment on a tribe which is in the process of a sea-change are quite interesting. As long as a community remains isolated, it develops solidarity, exclusiveness and affinity. But when it moves out of its narrow local limits and comes in contact with the people at large of the world outside, disintegration of its culture and disruption of its homogeneity set in. This has happened to the Oraons of the Sundargarh district of Orissa whose ways of life are in a flux since their migration from their original native-place. This article attempts to show how traditional leadership based on hereditary, custom, wealth and wisdom has given way to a dynamic and revolutionary leadership based on education, enlightenment and political consciousness. An attempt has also been made to describe how the new leadership has become ineffective in the

recent past and how formal leaders of some distinction and influence are on the wane. The village priests, of course, command same respect, but their influence is confined to the performance of the religious rituals.

In their new settlement at Sundargarh their traditional Panchayat has lost much of its importance because of reduction in its functions and diminution of its influence. In the past the Panchayat was invested with socio-religious responsibilities and political and judicial powers. In the changed set-up it was reduced to the position of a formal body in nominal charge of socio-religious affairs. In consequence the traditional leaders who once wielded much influence and were held in high esteem by the feudal chiefs lost their power and prestige. On the other hand, new leaders emerged. They were keen on reforming the society by abolishing degrading traditional practices with the help of tribal council organized on the model of the caste council of the neighbouring Hindus. In this respect they were greatly inspired by the pre-independence movement in the country. The special privileges accorded to them

by the Government and various social legislations enacted during the post-independent period accelerated their reformative movement. But the new leaders did not continue effectively for long on account of various impediments. This resulted in the disintegration of Oraon leadership as discussed here. The existence of a well-organized Village administration by the feudal kings before independence, the spread of christianity and missionary activities, social institutions of the caste Hindus, dissemination of education and the all-round improvement of their condition effected through special measures by the Government, provision of modern amenities of life, introduction of the statutory Panchayat and the industrial facilities in the area are responsible for the changes in their leadership pattern. Before going into these details a brief account based on the observations of S. C. Ray in 1915 on their leadership pattern should better be given at the outset.

The Oraons, in the past managed their own affairs by enforcing laws, customs and usages through the full-fledged machinery of village and *Parha* a group Panchayat (councils of a group of neighbouring villages) which were democratic in nature. At the village level, the *Mahato* and the *Pahan* (also called *Baiga* and *Naaga* were the chief official of the Panchayat. The former was the secular headman and the latter, the religious headman who was assisted by the *Pajor* or *Panbhara* in discharging his duties. In some villages both the posts were held by a single person. These posts of village officials belonging to *Bhainbar* families (the original settlers) of the village were generally hereditary. They along with the village elders constituted the village Panchayat to maintain law and order. They also decided all disputes, and tried all cases of social offences and suspected cases of witchcraft and sorcery. Sometimes cases of assault

and theft were disposed of by them. Besides these village officials, there were also village servants like the *Garaft* (barber), the *Ahir* (the shepherd) the *Lohara* (the blacksmith) and the *Kumbhar*, (the Potter).

Beyond the village, there was the organization of *Parha* Panchayat formed by a group of neighbouring villages. The traditional headman (*Mahato*) of the most important village (called *Raja* Village) was to preside over the *Parha* meetings. There were also other officials, viz. the *Dewan* (Prime Minister), *Panrey* (the clerk of the crown), *Kotwar* (Bailiff) and the *Kartaba* (the priest for social and socio-religious functions). Besides the important task of maintaining peace and order and adjudicating inter-village disputes, it arranged hunting expeditions. Thus the *Parha* organization was a social, judicial and political body.

On their arrival in Sundargarh nearly a century ago they settled down in multi-caste and multi-tribal villages where the most important official in the well-organized village administration was the *Gountia*...He was also known as *Ganjhu*, *Head-Ganjhu*, *Parganadar*, *Moufidar*, *Kharposhdars* and *Shikim Gountia* respectively in different localities. The post was usually hereditary, the eldest son succeeding the father. In the absence of lineal descendants one collateral senior male relative succeeded if he was joint with the deceased *Gountia* or a Co-sharer in the village *bhogra* (rent free land). In the absence of heirs, the widow of the last *Gountia* succeeded. She held the title for life or until she was re-married. If there was more than one widow the senior-most among them succeeded.

Besides rayoti-land, the *Gountia* was allowed to enjoy *Bhogra*-land for his services. He was exempted from payment of rent. He had unlimited administrative power over the village

in his charge. Some of his multifarious duties were (i) to accord permission to the new migrants to settle down in the village and to recommend to the ruling chief for allotting land to them, (ii) to collect and credit into the treasury the revenue, cesses, grazing fees and all other dues of the village as directed by the authority, (iii) to keep the authorities informed of the movement of strangers, of unnatural death and outbreak of calamities like smallpox, cholera and famine, of unauthorised cutting of trees from the forest, and of illegal transfer of land, (iv) to look after the maintenance of village orchards (v) to supply rations on payment at the prevailing rate, (vi) to assist the officials on tour in the performance of their lawful duties, and (vii) to supervise the work of the village *Chowkidar* (watchman), the *Kalo* (village-priest) and the *Nariha* (waterman). He was also responsible for their appointment and dismissal with the concurrence of the ruling chief.

When such a system of village administration with the *Gountia* at the head was in force, the Oraons who settled down amidst them, were also subject to the rules and the mandates of the village council. Under such circumstances the Oraon village officials lost all political and judicial powers and the *Parha* organization disappeared. The tribal council of the village became a body to look after socio-religious matters peculiar to their own tribe only. Thus the prevailing village-administration gave the first and foremost blow to the foundation of the traditional Oraon leadership.

The second important cause of toppling of the traditional Oraon leadership was the proselytism and spread of Christianity in the area. The Christian Missions of various

denomination have been working in the area for the last 80 years or so. They have succeeded in converting tribals on a large scale. The Oraons have embraced Christianity in a large number (23.8 per cent of the total Oraon population are Christians as per 1961 Census). They run a number of schools, hospitals and other voluntary organizations including churches. After conversion, they no more follow their traditional customs including religious beliefs and their former practices and treatment of diseases. They changed their mode of life in many respects and availed themselves of the educational, medical and other facilities like the non-converts to some extent. Notwithstanding of the good effects of their conversion, some unhealthy repercussions are manifest in the village life of the area. Religion is one of the most important binding forces in a rural society for its integrity and harmony; and when there is emergence of a new group with a new religion, there is disintegration of traditional culture with disunity and disharmony in the society. This was the case in the Oraon society. The new group with a new faith looked forward to the Christian priests for aid and advice in everything. They established separate organizations like the Church, the *grainkola*, the hospital and the school of their own in different villages. Thus a portion of their population owed their allegiance not to the traditional leaders but to the leaders of the new faith which resulted in the decline of power and prestige of the traditional leaders.

Industrial innovations in the area also contributed to changes in their traditional leadership. Establishment of industrial township like Rajgangpur, Rourkela and Kansahal provided ample scope for employment to them. They moved from place to

place for employment and there occurred social mobility due to contact with various alien groups. Their temporary migration to different places and new avenues of employment influenced them to adopt new cultural ways. Prior to this, there were the influences of superior cultural groups into whose midst they come to settle down, and these influences acted to bring about changes in them. Due to several degrading cultural practices, the Oraons were considered untouchable by their superior neighbours who assigned to them a lower rung of the social ladder. With this back ground the enlightened and educated people of the tribe thought of moulding their fellow tribesmen in the changed environment. The pre-independence movement gave them courage and impetus to reorganize their society by adopting reformatory measures. Special programmes of development and privileges and facilities were guaranteed to them by the constitution of the country after independence. The post-independence measures accelerated the inchoate movement among them.

There emerged dynamic and educated leaders to revive village and inter-village tribal assembly on the model of their old *Parha* organization. New nomenclatures for the office-bearers adopted in imitation of the prevailing caste-council of the Hindus of the area were in vogue. A group of neighbouring villages formed *Parha* with a *Raja* or President as its head and a *Dewan* or a Secretary to keep records and to organize its meetings. The traditional *Kartah* was retained to officiate in the ceremony of re-admitting an excommunicated Oraon. These office-bearers, the educational qualification, outlook, influence in the society, and contact with other castes and tribes were taken into considera-

tion. The *Behera* was, in his turn, elected by the elders of the concerned villages.

When the *Parha* Panchayats were thus reorganized, several reformatory resolutions relating to their heavy addiction to liquor, dance, illiteracy, conversion to christianity and marriage customs were passed. They also dealt with social offences such as disobedience of marriage rules, clan rules, sexual offences, violation of taboos and conflicts arising during partition of property. A few examples of the functions of the *Parha* Panchayat of Lahuripada area of the district are furnished below :—

(a) A girl who runs away with or marries a boy of another caste or tribe, will on no account be readmitted into the community. If she comes back and stays with her parents or previous husband the whole family will be shut out of the caste. The family, thus excommunicated, will not be readmitted till the excommunicated girl is driven out from the family.

(b) If an Oraon boy marries a girl belonging to another caste or tribe, the boy and his family will be excommunicated till the boy abandons the girl. When the girl goes away, the boy and his family are readmitted on undergoing the purification ceremony.

(c) If an Oraon boy marries a girl of his own clan the boy is excommunicated. Only after dissolution of the marriage the boy is readmitted to the tribe.

(d) The amounts of bride-price and other presentation at the time of different types of marriages were fixed as follows :—

(i) For marriage by negotiation and polygamous marriage the payment

of bride-price was limited to Rs. 7-00 in cash, three pieces of cloth (18'x6' in size each) and Re. 0-25 for the bride's girl friends of her village.

(ii) In case of marriage between a man having children and a widow who had issues by the deceased husband, the bride price was fixed at Rs. 3-00 in cash, two pieces of cloth and Re. 0-12 for the girls of the widow's village.

(c) For violation of food taboos in relation to other castes and tribe, punishment in shape of excommunication was prescribed.

(f) For readmitting a person excommunicated for violation of tribal endogamy and food taboos the offender had to pay Rs. 250-00 towards the purificatory rites which included a communal feast.

(g) For readmitting a person excommunicated for marriage within the own clan, Rs. 360-00 would be charged on the offender for the purificatory ceremony.

(h) The use of immoderate quantity of alcoholic drink freely during communal gatherings to celebrate religious or other ceremonies was banned.

(i) Regular dancing and singing were also restricted to festive occasions.

(j) As most of them are illiterate all were persuaded to send their children to the nearby school.

Besides the reformatory measures, the Parha organization, organized general meetings to discuss the various problems arising under the changed circumstances. On such occasions the leaders appealed to their tribesmen to

refrain from the degrading practices without being lured by the Christian Missionaries. They also appealed for regaining tribal solidarity which they had been enjoying earlier to achieve progress and prosperity. Influential Oraon leaders from different parts of Sundargarh district were also invited to several meetings of tribesmen in the neighbouring States of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. In such meetings their leaders appealed to their tribesmen to boycott the Christian Missionaries and to get united to retain the past glory.

The reorganized Parha Panchayats, later on, became functionless. The powerful *Gauntia* at the level of village administration was also stripped of his powers after the introduction of the statutory Grama Panchayat system in 1955. Among the Oraons the village-priest known as *Naega* and his assistant *Phulsuari* (in some localities only) still continue to officiate in whatever ceremonies of aboriginal origin they have so far retained. The tribal Panchayat at the village level consists of informal leaders from each ward, if there are several wards in the village. These informal leaders are generally the representatives of the village on the statutory Panchayat, they are kinsmen of the ex-*Gauntia* or of the village-Mati (shaman), or of the educated persons. There is also institution of traditional *Kartak* to officiate in the ceremony for readmitting the excommunicated Oraon. These influential persons and the village elders are responsible for the social control of the tribe at the village level.

In spite of the gradual decline of its powers through modern influences the informal tribal council still administers justice in case of breaches of tribal usages and customs, and organizes the communal rites and festivals.

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# The Developmental Approach to Adivasi Problems

(A Case Study in West Bengal)

P. K. BHOWMICK

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## Introduction :

The Adivasi are the so-called autochthons or the aboriginal groups of people in India. These groups of people belong to variegated ethnic and cultural stocks. When compared with their advanced neighbours, they are found economically impoverished, culturally isolated and backward in many respects. Hence they are rightly considered the weaker sections of our society. These groups of people are distributed almost all over India, with variable concentrations in a few zones. They live with their crude technology, adjusting themselves with great efforts to the environment. Though they lived in isolation on account of their peculiar socio-cultural environment, yet there is ample evidence of their interaction with the advanced groups of people from the remotest past. The long interaction gave them the incentive and opportunity of being assimilated slowly with the dominant Hindu social and economic systems. This gradual transformation created some acculturated tribal groups, having distinctive physical features, but sharing the common economic traits and regional beliefs and customs along with the so-called peasant class of our country.

Of course, in course of time, they found easy access in the regional social structure, by professing a particular type of occupation, as prevalent in caste-bound occupations of the people. However, the British rule in this country brought about a sharp departure from this normal and continuous assimilation process. When the outsiders, i.e., traders, money-lenders and contractors, etc., began to make inroad into the sylvan tribal land to exploit them schemingly, this had a definite impact on the tribal mind. Poverty and indebtedness became dominant. Dissatisfaction gave vent to conflict, tension and uprising of these people from time to time. There are several instances of such disaffection. So, the problems of these groups of people became more pronounced, and this tempted the framers of the Constitution to lay more emphasis on the need of improving their conditions by protecting their rights land and forests and providing safe-guards against all sorts of exploitation.

Besides, provisions were made through many Welfare Schemes for the social and economic development of these people. Special emphasis on such measures of upliftment was laid in the 5th and 6th Schedules of the



Constitution for solving their problems and launching programmes of betterment of these weaker sections of our country;

As per the Constitution, almost all the tribal people are Scheduled Tribes. Hence they are entitled to enjoyment of the facilities outlined in the Republican Constitution of 1950. There are more than 427 communities scheduled for the administrative purposes, who can have such benefits, and their population\* is about 7 per cent of the total population of India. Thus these groups of people came under the purview of 3 special constitutional privileges which assures them of equality of treatment with all other citizens without discrimination.

## II

### Problems :

Tribal communities are confronted with many problems due to their tradition-bound subsistence patterns, with less improvement in technology. Besides, the forests and the lands which were so long used by the tribal communities can no longer sustain the growing population now. Poor quality of soil and encroachment on the land by others, and non-availability of the means of supplementary food collection, compelled the tribal people to live in an abysmal depth of poverty and deficiency for generations. Various other difficulties such as dearth of good drinking water, prevailing unhygienic condition, want of modern educational facilities, lack of proper residential huts and unregulated contact with the hostile and exploiting neighbours, made their life most miserable.

These tribal communities were exposed to many external influences

which accentuated unequal changes throughout the country. Thus the nature of their problem varies from place to place, and from community to community. Some tribal communities suffer from the social stigma of criminality and these people are known as ex-criminal or denotified communities. Their problems are of a different nature. Due to various reasons, they had developed and pursued anti-social activities for centuries together. These communities have again developed some slants and angularities in their mental sphere, which distinctly isolated them from the rest of the society. Long social neglect and isolation and stoic apathy of the neighbours towards them have generated in them a different attitude and set of ideas towards the society and world at large and vice versa.

Considering all these basic problems of the tribal communities of this sub-continent, our Republican Constitution provided many opportunities for the overall betterment of these people, with a view to bringing about national unity and emotional integration. It was expected that within a stipulated period, these people, by acquiring a higher social standard, would be in a position to compete with their advanced neighbours in all spheres of life.

As a matter of fact, the problems of the tribal communities are now being pin-pointed and properly discussed and, in due course, grants are being made available for their development. In many respects, plans are designed by some experts or administrators to be executed by the State Government agencies or voluntary organisations in a very generalised way; and these

\* The total population according to the Census of 1961—479, 072, 5824.  
Total Tribal population (2)—39,879,226

schemes in the course of implementation, added new problem and offered little by way of remedies. Such are the problems of the tribes as well as the welfare schemes in our country.

### III

#### Case Study:

In the present paper, the author wants to present the various welfare measures and developmental plans of the Government for the welfare of denotified community named the Lodhas.

The total number of Lodhas in the State of West Bengal is about 15,000 and they are concentrated in the district of Midnapur. Some of them are also found in adjoining States, in Mayurbhanj in Orissa and in Singhbhum in Bihar. They live in the outskirts of the village, near the forest, in segregation, together with a few families. They have no fixed occupation or honourable means of livelihood. Near the jungle or forest area, they try to collect edible leaves, fruits, roots and tubers and catch snakes and lizards. They fish and catch tortoise in the water reservoirs or silted tanks. Some of them collect faggots and sell these in the locality. Very few of them have learnt the art of agriculture, though some among them have a very small quantity of land. Some of them are engaged in agricultural operations, though Lodha labour is not generally liked by the land-holding communities.

All sorts of anti-social activities are attributed to these people and as such whenever any case of dacoity or theft or robbery is reported to the Police, a good number of the Lodhas are suspected, harassed and arrested without any regard to whether they are actually involved or not. Such was the condition of the Lodhas prior to the revocation of the Criminal Tribes

Act in 1953. Very little changes have taken place since then. No scientific investigation was made about them by anybody prior to the investigation of the author.

These people were under the purview of the Home(Police) Department. An arrangement was made for the rehabilitation of a few families on an experimental basis by purchasing a few Bighas of land, for allotment to all the heads of the families of a village named Kukai, under the Police-station of Kesiari. It was supervised by the Harijan Sevakendra. A co-operative Society was formed and the members of the Board of Directors were all recruited from among the Lodhas, who were placed in charge of its management.

Next the Lodhas were declared as a Scheduled Tribe and, as such, they came within the purview of the Tribal Welfare Department. A modest rehabilitation scheme was framed for them again and the scheme was executed under the supervision of the Harijan Sevak Sangha, West Bengal branch. The scheme was operated at Auligeria, Jhargram. Rs. 1,500/- per family for 50 families was provided for development. The blue-print envisaged purchase of land building of houses purchase of agricultural appliances, bullocks and goats, poultry rearing, recreational facilities and wages for cultivation, along with remuneration for the social worker. They also organised one co-operative society, just to give the Lodhas the leadership. But it is reported that the whole scheme has not been successful. There did not occur any significant change in the life of the Lodhas. Though the Education Department of the Government of West Bengal has set up a junior basic school and a senior basic school in the locality, these people take no interest in these.

Again, such a scheme was executed at Dholkat, Jhargram, under the direct supervision of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha for 20 families. The officers-in-charge of the Sangha built up residential huts with corrugated iron-sheet roofing and allotted to all the families some quantity of available land (which is Dahi or high land and is not suitable for intensive agricultural purposes). They also provided all the families with a bullock and other items as mentioned in the scheme. But in spite of this, improvement of the lot of the Lodhas was not satisfactory though the Sangha Authorities, through their charity and relief-work, tried to do something for this group of degraded humanity which was in sore need of redemption. Yet the Government was not happy with the nature of induced changes made among the Lodhas during this period. So the major part of the amount sanctioned by the Government remained unspent. Then the Tribal Welfare Department invited the Samaj Sevak Sangha, which did this work earlier, to implement a similar scheme at Daharpur under the police-station of Narayanagarh. The scheme was for 39 families, providing Rs. 1,500 for each family. The sponsors of the scheme requested the Government to revise some of its items. Besides, they formed one Rehabilitation Sub-Committee with three Government nominees, namely, the Block Development Officer, the District Special Officer for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare and the Assistant Director of the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of West Bengal, in order to steer clear of the problems more quickly. Items of housebuilding were minimised. Money was diverted for the purchase of better cultivable land. Bullocks were purchased and allotted to the families, according to the actual requirement of cultivation.

Some top-ranking Officers of the Tribal Welfare Department did not welcome such changes made by the sponsors for its implementation. At the end, the scheme was handed over to a newly constituted Co-operative Society formed by the Lodhas, who are expected to be guided by the Co-operative Department and the Tribal Welfare Department.

The said Sangha is again entrusted by the Government with the responsibility of implementing a similar scheme at Dhansol, under the police-station of Binpur in Jhargram Sub-division. The scheme was implemented in the same manner. For this scheme, the Sangha authorities laid emphasis not only on agriculture, but also on training of a few novices for some small-scale cottage industries like mat-making and weaving, just to enable them to spend their leisure time in gainful employment. Instead of offering residential huts to all the Lodha beneficiaries, they constructed a few model huts and repaired in the traditional way the old dilapidated huts. Besides, the sponsor constructed one big community-hut to accommodate the bachelors there, and to receive guests when necessary.

Prior to the rehabilitation, there were a few active criminals in the village Daharpur. Still they are there. Though they apparently welcomed the proposal of rehabilitation, they were not happy. They had hoped for a project like a hospital, where every body would have free board and lodging. They thought their miseries would come to an end all on a sudden through measures like a shock-therapy. But in reality it was a painstaking affair, and this sort of attitude, developed in course of implementation of the scheme, was a strange reaction.

Now we have to examine the reactions to as well as the nature of benefits that accrued from such schemes. At Kukai, the land purchased out of Government money was under the Co-operative Society. A few Lodhas demanded that they should be given land on a personal basis. Some Lodhas wanted to have individual ownership right over the land. This was done. Now, only a few are in a position to cultivate the land; others are found to have mortgaged it or have given it away to non-Lodha cultivators on share-cropping basis. The Lodhas are not in a position to bear the agricultural expenses and they have no patience to wait for the harvest, which does not always carry an assured profit. Thus a good number of them, as reported by the officers, are again indulging in anti-social activities. The social worker, who wanted to restore the management of land on a co-operative basis, has been driven out by the Lodhas from the village.

The case of Auligeria is more deplorable. Three years ago, there was a serious riot in which the Lodhas were attacked and mercilessly killed by the Santals and the Mahatos. A few notorious criminals were cut into pieces in broad day-light by the infuriated Santals. These victimised criminals were the inmates of this colony. But the organiser of the said colony had a very impressive tale to tell in their favour.

Dholkat also experienced the riot when all the belongings of the Lodhas were forcibly taken away and a few huts were set ablaze with fire. But the Sangha authority did their best by giving them immediate relief from their own fund very sympathetically.

The problems have not, however, been solved yet.

The Samaj Sevak Sangha have had to face different problems. From the very beginning they identified the incorrigible criminals and tried their best to tackle them. It was very apparent to the sponsorer that the criminality of the Lodhas was due to their territorial and economic displacement. The food-gathering Lodhas oppressed by the land-grabbing communities found it difficult to maintain themselves. They were clamped in narrow forests. Besides, the forests were also given on lease to others who did not allow the Lodhas to utilise them fully, according to their needs. Thus they faced many problems for their survival.

In such a situation, they were not in a position to reorient their ways of life. Thus they had no other alternative than to take to the path of criminality which struck a deep gorge in their moral character and the people had to wander about helplessly. It was actually very difficult to make them good cultivators because such a thing needs experience and capability. So the sponsorer encouraged cultivation of banana, papaw, etc., which were easily available and out of which the people could get immediate benefit with minimum labour. The young generation has a greater proneness for criminality. The youths were separated from the incorrigible criminals and given more opportunities for starting small-scale cottage industries and enjoying recreational facilities in a group, through indoor-games and radio programmes and playing of gramophone records. Arrangements were made for adult education and sports and outings. A follow-up scheme was submitted to the Government and

they granted it, though not with a liberal amount of fund. A Junior Basic School was established and one Ashram Hostel for the boys was started. Later on another Senior Basic School was established. Another hostel for the boys was started and one for the girls was started thereafter. Though the land has been given to the Lodhas individually, some of them are not in a position to cultivate it. Most of them get co-operation from the Sangha. By this time, a good number of Lodhas have become good cultivators. They are now in a position to use pump-set and other machines, and to cultivate improved varieties of paddy. A good number of them (both male and female) are in a position to work with the looms run by the Sangha. Two persons have been given cycle-rickshaws, and another got a tailoring machine. They are now eager to send their children to the school or to the hostel for education.

The authorities of the organisation help them at the time of need by advancing money on marriage occasions.

#### IV

##### Impact Vs. Reaction

There are altogether five rehabilitation centres started during this period of 15 years, distributed at five different places. These schemes hardly accommodated 200 families, i.e., 1,000 souls, out of a total approximate population of 15,000. So its impact on the beneficiaries, as well as, on the Lodhas in general, and on the other hand, on the neighbouring non-Lodha tribals and Caste Hindu groups is of special significance. Assessment of the nature of economic and social benefits that accrued from such schemes, and other types of reactions, justifies the intrinsic worth of these schemes.

##### The Lodha beneficiaries and the Lodhas

The Lodhas had to suffer from chronic economic difficulties as well as social neglect for centuries together. This consciousness played a role in their mind and made them hostile to the so-called neighbours, who according to the Lodhas, are unsympathetic. It has been observed that their so-called civilised neighbours hate them for their suspected criminal propensities. They are also afraid of the Lodhas, who may steal away their belongings. This sort of suspicion still continues among the groups concerned. These, ultimately contributed to the outbreak of two serious type of tension in the form of riot and forcible decampment of the Lodhas from different villages. When attempts were being made to start rehabilitation centres in these places, the Lodhas developed some imaginary ideas of receiving immediate benefit in the form of shelter and food, as well as raising of their social status and removing their accursed state of social neglect.

A sum of Rs. 1,500 is not sufficient to bring about benefit of a permanent nature. Thus, this made the beneficiary Lodhas more frustrated, leading to displacement of their goals. This unconsciously impelled them to curse the sponsor. Besides, they are not interested in agricultural activities and they have no patience to wait for harvest either. It has been observed that they prefer working and earning daily wages to cultivating their own land. They are ready to dispose of their own land to outsiders, who sometimes advance them money or paddy. Maintenance of bullocks or cows or goats is expensive and time taking, and it requires keeping a constant watch on these animals. They are not in the habit of keeping these animals. Even the poultry or the

goats are killed and eaten rather than domesticated for purpose of business and profit.

To have gradual social cohesion with the bigger society and to achieve a prestigious status they require refinement of manners and customs and mental preparation, which cannot be done within a short period. So the expectations of the beneficiary Lodhas have had a jolt received through unpleasant realities.

With such an outlook, when they found that they had to work hard on the land which was given to them to ameliorate their economic conditions, they were threatened with unemployment in the locality, and they did not find any real solution to their problems through such schemes. This made them less inclined to remote future pleasures and least pleased with the actual circumstances.

In a few cases, a good number of Lodhas asked for money from the social workers to meet the expenses of tobacco and rice-beer, refusal of which made them hostile and reactionary. Similarly, the social workers wanted to stop anti-social activities by exerting personal influence. It had some effect on the mind of these people. But it had a different reaction on the incorrigible criminals. It was criticised by them. These incorrigible criminals used to get their support from the non-Tribals, who were the recipient of the stolen property. These non-tribals were seemingly sympathetic to the Lodhas and hostile to and critical of such schemes.

The Lodhas of the adjoining villages became jealous, to some extent, because they did not get any

sort of direct benefits out of such schemes. No provision has been made in the schemes for their active participation.

### Non-Lodhas:

The neighbouring non-Lodha tribals, as well as other people have a very serious type of mental reaction in regard to these schemes. They have apparently observed that huts have been built up for the Lodhas, and land, bullocks, agricultural appliances, goats and poultry birds have been given to them, yet the Lodhas are not in a position to utilise these to their advantage. Land is left uncultivated, bullocks are sold out, goats are consumed for meat and birds are eaten up. They are not in a position to assess the capability of the Lodhas and the nature of resources. They find that these happen in a colony and think that these are the items of gift. The colourful description of such gifts and rumours of huge expenditure incurred make them frenzied and keep them tantalized. On the contrary, they see in actuality, that the Lodhas commit crimes, as they did before, and pursue threatening anti-social activities as usual, and threaten tranquility, peace and order in the locality. The other non-Lodha anti-social elements, who have clandestine relationship with the criminal Lodhas, try their level best to bring them back to the path of criminality, propagating against the Government policies, and voluntary organisations as well as the social workers, who are in charge of the schemes.

Thus the Lodhas remain in isolation as they always did far away from the socio-economic and cultural boundaries of the people of the locality. But they keep themselves informed of criticisms and adverse comments.

### **The Government Officers and others:**

The Government Officers who frequently visit the centres sometimes find the discontented Lodhas giving some false statements against the organisation or the workers, as this is very natural. Actually they cannot be satisfied with such limited money, leisure and social intercourse. In this connection it may be said that these criminal people are not so simple like the other tribal people. But in many cases, the Officers believe in their words without questioning. This has resulted in more confusion and chaos. Sometimes the Officers who stayed for a short period, gave them hope of a bright future, which was beyond the reach or accomplishment of the organisation or the Government. This led to discontentment, which seriously affected the welfare work.

### **V**

#### **Integrated approach and orientation of the Schemes :**

It has been stated earlier that all the tribal groups have different problems, sets of ideas, patterns of life and different aspiration level. One type does not fit in with the other. Hence, their problems or difficulties have to be investigated in a very scrutinising way in respect of individual groups. We must not overlook the geo-physical background and the influence of the ethnic groups. So for a better plan or scheme, we must emphasise all these aspects. Besides, for solving the problems of the tribes like the ex-criminal Lodhas, we have to consider not only the problems of the Lodhas who create problems due to their character and cultural maladjustment, but also the difficulties of their neighbours and the administration. All these problems should be tackled carefully. Otherwise, the whole scheme may fail.

Rehabilitation schemes should be economic first, and in course of time, they should be attuned to the changing economic spectrum of the locality. If the people are not agriculturists basically, attempts should be made to introduce horticulture by providing them with more sources of water and other necessities for agriculture, by which they may feel disposed to accept all these innovations with the least resistance. Arrangements should also be made for some gainful employments for them throughout the year, by providing them with facilities for small-scale cottage industries, if they are not suitable for other types of jobs. This sort of employment may prevent them from going outside to mix with other degraded people. They should be gradually accommodated with better ways of life. Incentives for all sorts of personal enterprise in agriculture should be given because agriculture is a process in which an individual has to devote himself seriously for most of the time of the year. When any rehabilitation or any welfare measures would be considered, at least 10 per cent from other tribals and 5 per cent from Scheduled Caste Groups should be included to get some economic benefit. This will check the spirit of separatism. This spirit is very harmful for unity and integration of our country.

Regarding their residential huts, they should be given their own choice first. Of course these should be remodelled in a hygienic way. These huts should be such as can be repaired and remodelled according to the capacity or ability of the people when Government aid is withdrawn. There should be community huts to accommodate bachelors or the widowers. Provisions should be made for the guests also, because external contact should be maintained to infuse new ideas and a new sense of values in them.

There should be an adult education centre with audio-visual facilities. Both males and females should be encouraged to take part in such programmes. A sympathetic and trained teacher is to be recruited. He should be in a position to stay among the group concerned.

Next comes the pattern of education. To impart education to the Lodhas or similar groups of people, there should be Ashram type of hostels, all the requirements should be met by the Government. The location of this type of hostel should be selected in such a way, as the Ashramites may be in a position to devote their attention to education. There should be other tribal and Scheduled Caste boys living with these students. Besides, a Day Home type of school should be encouraged, where all the tribal children from the locality will come to take lessons and have their mid-day meals. They will receive here vocational training, and facilities for recreational activities should be arranged through sports, games and musical performances.

Arrangement should be made for frequent social intercourse through debate and seminar, and participation of social workers and researchers in them should be welcomed. This will haul up the students from their narrow environs to the wider sphere of life.

The rural library scheme should be encouraged in a centre and a good number of feeder schools and libraries should be organised. This will give opportunity to all the people of the different groups to come to a common platform.

As for management and administration, these should be run by an Advisory Committee consisting of experts, social workers and Administrative Officers from Block, District and State levels.

It should be remembered by the planners that the beneficiaries would have to be gradually articulated with the existing middle-class norms of the society of the region, through the augmentation of their genius and abandonment of their evil propensities. In course of time, they will be part and parcel of the society, bringing about national integration and putting an end to the narrow tendency of parochialism or isolation.

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# The Economic Backwardness of the Gadabas

B. B. MOHANTY

Koraput has the distinction of being the largest district of Orissa and the Scheduled Area having the highest tribal population. It is a region of every kind of elevation and depression. On its red, sandy and hilly terrain live several primitive communities representing different tribes. The Gadabas are one of them. This article is a study of the economic backwardness of those of the Gadabas who live in an obscure hamlet called Pangel which stands on the top of a hillock. Though one swallow does not make a summer, the struggle for survival of the Gadabas of that hamlet may be taken as a typical instance of the battle of existence of the entire community of the district.

Nandapur town, the ancient political headquarters of the feudatory State of Koraput, now goes by the name of Joypore Samasthanam. They say that the history of this hoary settlement of the tribals can be traced to times farther backwards than the commencement of the Christian era. Pangul, the hilly abode of the Gadabas, is ten miles away from Nandapur. The total number of mud-buts with thatched roofs found in the hamlet is forty-seven out of which only fifteen dwelling-houses belong to the Gadabas. The remaining thirty-two houses belong to the people of other castes, namely, the *Pannas*, the *Domas* and the *Ghasis*. The members of the latter communities are backward like the Gadabas. But through frequent contacts with the people of the

higher castes they have imbibed cunning and shrewdness through which they exploit the Gadabas in subtle ways. But the Gadabas are favourably disposed towards them.

Long ago, a dense forest surrounded the island tribes of the small hill of Pangel. Various kinds of trees and creepers, plants and shrubs, grasses and lichens, stood in an interwined and inseparable manner. One could recognize among the floras such trees as the Big Sal (*Shorea robusta*), the *Palas* (*Butea frondosa*), the *Mahua* (*Bassia Latifolia*), the *Jamu* (*Eugenia jambolana*), the *Kasum* (*Sesluchera trijaghi*), the *Sirisa* (*Albizia Lebbek*), the *Ambo* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), the *Kochila* (*Strychnos vomica*), the *Nim* (*Melia Indica*), the *Champak* (*Mischelia champaka*), the *Palu* (*Boerhaavia flabellifera*), the *Salpa* (*Cerytha urens*), cane, the *Sisu* (*Dalbergia Sisso*), and the *Sabai* grass (*Ischaemum angustifolium*). The feathered race of the forest region was represented by the wild duck, the wood cock, the peafowl, the brown pigeon, and the imperial pigeon. Of the wild animals the black buck, the barking deer, the Sambar (*carus unicolor*), the leopard cat, bison, the wild buffalo, the elephant, the tiger, the wild dog and the spotted deer were conspicuous.

The Gadabas ate edible fruits and roots of the forest. They hunted wild birds and animals for food. They cleared the higher slopes

of the hillock and grew crops there. The lower slopes washed by perennial stream had also been brought under cultivation. The former type of land was known as *Pada* or *Dangar* (dry land), and the latter type was called *Bada* (wet land). The forest provided them with fuel and timber to which they had free access. The needs of the tribe were few and these were met with what their environment yielded. Life was somewhat happy for them, and they lived like the natural denizens of the forest region in the same way in which fishes live in water.

As needs multiplied, population increased and consumption level rose, man altered the environment more and more to meet his needs. In his efforts to satisfy increased consumption needs he eradicated numerous species of animal and plant life and almost destroyed the natural life-support system on which he depended. The increasing pressure placed on the ecosystem produced a boomerang effect. The exploitation of man by man made matters worse. In course of time the Gadabas were reduced to their present deplorable condition and faced with extinction.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Gadabas who produce paddy crops in *Beda* lands (wet lands) and *Ragi, Suani* and *Alai* in *Dangar* lands (dry lands). The handicaps of their agricultural occupation are several. Many of them do not have lands of their own. The richest man of Pangel whom the writer met has only A23-13 Cents of agricultural land and the majority of the Gadabas have nothing more than homestead lands. So these landless people should be provided with agricultural land sufficient to enable them to eke out minimum living.

More gifts of land will not alone serve the purpose. The various handicaps that stand in the way of successful agriculture are to be removed as far as

practicable. The region denuded of forests and the hillsides bare of trees have had serious repercussions. Deforestation has led to decreasing rainfall and erosion of the soil, not to speak of the dearth of fuel, timber, pasture for cattle and scarcity of fruits and roots and tuber fit for human consumption. The soil has been rendered poor through loss of much of its fertility. It is deficient in potash, lime and phosphoric acid. It lacks the capacity to retain moisture and absorb nutrients. While the soil of the upland is full of gravels that of the lowlands is laden with loam and clay. The natural sylvan surroundings from which the Gadabas have been uprooted are to be restored through measures of social forestry. Along with reforestation the process of setting up of orchards in the backyard of the hut of a Gadaba should be started. Application of fertilisers of which the Gadabas are ignorant is to be initiated. The evil of destruction of condung through use as fuel and the good of applying it to lands as useful traditional fertilisers are to be brought home to their mind. The region is hilly and the climate is hot and dry. The facilities for irrigation do not exist. The only source of water necessary to feed the crops is rains. So, some measures to store rain-water, which is seasonal, and to irrigate the upper regions by special device are to be adopted. Improved seeds, and implements, know-how and pesticide are also necessary for them.

Many of them work as labourers on the basis of daily wages. Though they work from dawn to dusk, they are not paid proportionately. For example, half a rupee for cutting crops and a quarter of a rupee for weeding are respectively the wages of a labourer. Some of them are also the victims of the pernicious system of bonded labour. Steps are needed to see that no Gadabas is paid less than the prescribed minimum wages and that he is redeemed from bondage.

The Gadabas get into debt as an alternative to death by starvation. But in doing so they prefer to subject themselves to ever-growing oppression and impoverishment. The money lenders who loan out cash or crops to them charge very exorbitant interest which is sometimes as high as 50 per cent. The more the indebted person tries to pay up the capital and interest, the deeper he gets into the mire of indebtedness. Credit facilities provided by rural banks and co-operatives may go a long way in relieving the distress of the Gadabas in this respect.

Businessmen also exploit them. They move from door to door for purchasing *Atsi* at the time of harvest. Their motive is to buy things at the cheapest rate and resell them at a high price. Lured by ready price, compelled by the pressure to perform social rituals and goaded by their thirst for liquor, the Gadabas easily fall into the trap of the greedy tradesmen out on profiteering business. On days of fair commodities are sold and purchased through payment of cash price as well as the traditional barter system. When exchange of things for things takes place the modern weight and measure are not used. The profit that the businessmen make by exploiting the ignorance of the Gadabas may be illustrated thus. Suppose, a man buys a match-box for ten paise, takes out all the match sticks which it contains puts an equal number of these sticks in five different empty match-boxes, and sells each of the newly-equipped match-box at ten paise, he will be getting fifty paise in the gross, and his net profit will be forty paise. Such a man will be an appropriate representative of the tradesman who carries on business with a Gadaba, and the profit that he makes is four times the buying price.

The apathetic and the unscrupulous official at times harasses or hoodwinks

the simple and credulous Gadabas in order to dig more money out of them than what they are under obligation to pay. Cases of such treatment are to be reported to the higher authorities along with instances of violation of the laws relating to bonded labour and rural indebtedness.

There's a Tamilian saying that a field mouse goes in for two wives when the harvest is good. If a Gadaba reaps a good harvest of the *ragi* crops he squanders the produce in preparing a kind of intoxicant called 'Pendum' and makes himself merry and entertains his friends with that kind of drink. In case he cannot prepare such drink himself he sells out his produce to buy liquor from the local vendor. Addiction to liquor leads him to extravagance and compels him to sell his land at any price to the money-lender. The Gadabas also follow blindly the old social customs and religious practices which deplete his meagre resources and drive him to bankruptcy. Practices like paying bride-price at the time of marriage and the expensive performance of the rituals of *Gadar* ceremony for the peace and satisfaction of the spirits of their departed forbears are also some of the causes of their impoverishment. The anti-dowry law should be strictly enforced among them, and the spread of education and enlightenment is likely to root out their superstitions.

Liberal funds have been provided in the Fifth Five-Year Plan for the upliftment and welfare of the tribals of the country. The area to which this study is confined comes under the Koraput I. T. D. P. which has schemes and monetary allotment for developing the area and improving the quality of life of the economically backward tribes of the region. It is hoped that the Gadabas will have their share of the benefits envisaged for the tribal communities.

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